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INDEX			
QATAR	2-6, 24	COMMENT	22, 23
REGION	8	BUSINESS	1-6, 12-16
ARAB WORLD	8	CLASSIFIED	7-11
INTERNATIONAL	10-20	SPORTS	1-8



QP to buy 25% stake in S African exploration block from Total



Tokyo Olympics the next goal for Qatar's U-23 players

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-1175.21	-121.65	-1.62
-4.60%	-1.36%	-2.48%

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## In brief

### QATAR | Official

#### Emir congratulates president of Cyprus

His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Emir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani and HE the Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to Nicos Anastasiades on his re-election as President of Cyprus.

### QATAR | Aviation

#### Qatar Airways to launch direct flights to Hatay

Qatar Airways will launch its non-stop service to the Turkish city of Hatay on April 4, it was announced yesterday. The new three-times weekly route to the airline's fifth gateway in Turkey will be served by an Airbus A320, featuring 12 seats in Business Class and 132 seats in Economy Class. Hatay, also known as Antakya, was one of the largest cities in the Roman Empire, and is known for its many well-preserved ancient Roman mosaics, as well as its traditional products including olive oil soap, fine silk and delicious local cuisine. **Page 3**

### QATAR | Technology

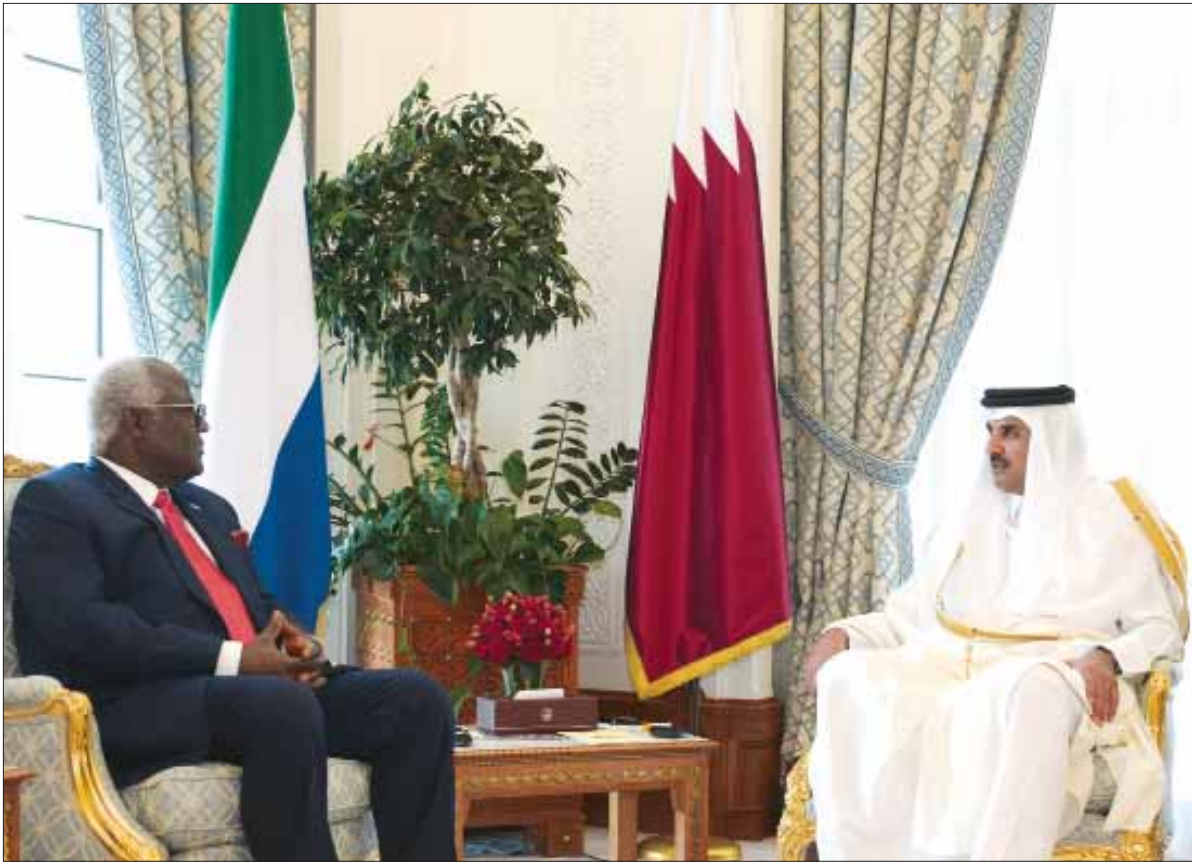
#### Qatar celebrates 'Safer Internet Day' today

Qatar joins the world in celebrating the Safer Internet Day today (February 6), reiterating the importance of awareness and education about Internet safety. The Qatari society is one of the most Internet-based communities and one of the most active social media users in the region. Qatar is a regional leader in adopting the latest mobile technology and is on the road to becoming a smart nation. The government invests in the society effectively and continuously, by developing policies and applying modern technology in the country.

### WORLD | Politics

#### Emergency in Maldives, former leader arrested

Maldives President Abdulla Yameen declared a 15-day state of emergency in the honeymoon islands yesterday, before heavily armed troops stormed the country's top court and a former president was arrested in a deepening political crisis. The tiny tourist archipelago has been plunged into chaos recently, with the president pitted against the Supreme Court after he refused to comply with its Thursday order to release nine political dissidents. Yesterday, police arrested Yameen's estranged half-brother and former president Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, who had sided with the main opposition and was campaigning against him. **Page 21**



His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani holding talks with the President of Sierra Leone, Ernest Bai Koroma, at the Emiri Diwan yesterday.

## Qatar, Sierra Leone agree to widen ties

●Emir, President Koroma hold talks  
 ●A number of agreements, MoUs signed

### QNA

Doha

His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani held a session of official talks with Sierra Leone President Ernest Bai Koroma at the Emiri Diwan yesterday.

At the beginning of the session, the Emir welcomed the president and his accompanying delegation, stressing that the visit will enhance the existing co-operation between the two countries.

President Koroma expressed hope that the visit will further develop relations between the two countries to include various fields. He also expressed his sincere thanks to the Emir for the humanitarian, medical and relief assistance provided by Qatar when Sierra Leone was hit by flooding and the outbreak of Ebola epidemic.

During the talks, the Emir and the president discussed bilateral relations and the prospects for enhancing them in various fields, especially in economy, trade, agriculture and tourism. They discussed a number of regional and international issues of common concern.

### Qatar, Sierra Leone energy ministers meet

HE the Minister of Energy and Industry Dr Mohamed bin Saleh al-Sada met with the Minister of Energy of Sierra Leone, Henry Olufumi. The meeting was also attended by Sierra Leone's Foreign Minister, Samura Kamara, and the accompanying delegation, as well as a number of officials from the Ministry of Energy and Industry, Kahramaa, Nebras Power and Qatar Mining. The two sides discussed the co-operation between the two countries. Olufumi briefed Dr al-Sada on the general situation of the energy sector in his country, includ-

ing future plans for generating energy using natural gas and renewable energy. Representatives of Nebras and Qatar Mining talked about the two companies strategies for investing outside the country as well as their plans to study investment opportunities in Africa in general and in Sierra Leone in particular. The two sides agreed to exchange information on investment opportunities in energy and mining in Sierra Leone and the possibility of exchanging visits at the technical level in the near future.

The session was attended by a number of ministers.

From the Sierra Leone side, it was attended by members of the official delegation accompanying the president.

Earlier on his arrival at the Emiri Diwan, the president was accorded an official reception.

His Highness the Emir and the Sierra Leone President witnessed the signing of a number of agreements and memorandums of understanding between the two countries.

The agreements were on encouraging and protecting mutual investments, on economical, trade and technical co-operation and on air services between the two countries.

They also witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on co-operating in the cultural field, an-

MoU between the foreign ministries of both countries on procedures for political consultations on issues of common concern and an MoU on co-operating in youth and sports.

The signing ceremony was attended by a number of ministers.

From the Sierra Leone side, it was attended by members of the official delegation accompanying the president.

The Emir hosted a luncheon banquet at the Emiri Diwan in honour of President Koroma and his accompanying delegation. The banquet was attended by a number of ministers.

President Koroma later left Doha at the end of an official visit to Qatar. The Sierra Leone delegation was seen off at Hamad International Airport by HE the Minister of Energy and Industry Dr Mohamed bin Saleh al-Sada. **Page 2**

## Saudi Arabia criticised for 'violating rights of Muslims'

### QNA

Jakarta

An international monitor has heavily criticised Saudi Arabia for its mismanagement of Islamic holy sites and its politicisation of religion.

The International Commission to Watch Saudi Administration of Muslim Places "Al Haramain Watch" in its first monthly report for January 2018 has pointed out several major violations by the Saudi authorities against the right of Muslims to practise their religion freely and without restrictions and its failure to manage the holy places in the kingdom.

The report, based on field monitoring by the staff of the Al Haramain Watch, included violations such as the practice of political extortion at the expense of Haj quotas and major corruption in the management of Haj and Umrah. It also discussed the use of mosques as platforms for political purposes, changing the place of prayer, the arrest and deportation of pilgrims illegally and raising the fees for performing rituals.

The report included facts and figures about the pilgrims, testimonies and complaints provided by people of different nationalities, most notably

Egyptians, Jordanians as well as people from several African countries.

The report referred to the activities carried out by the commission last month, such as the launching of an extensive international media campaign against Saudi Arabia's mismanagement of religious sites, the distortion and destruction of Islamic archaeological sites, politicisation of worship, use of Islamic platforms in the country for marketing political decisions and depriving Muslims of their right to perform rituals for political reasons.

Al Haramain Watch denounced the abuse of Muslims by the Saudi authorities and denying them the right to perform religious rites without any convincing justification. Al Haramain Watch called on the Saudi authorities to stop such practices and the need to respect international law and the UN Charter signed by Saudi Arabia, in particular Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Al Haramain Watch was established earlier this year with the aim of exerting pressure on Saudi Arabia to ensure good management of the holy sites and the preservation of Islamic historical sites and the non-politicisation of Haj and Umrah.

## World Cup referees gather in Qatar

### AFP

Doha

Referees from four countries boycotting Qatar attended a high-profile FIFA World Cup seminar in Doha yesterday, despite the ongoing Gulf political crisis.

Representatives from Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt were at the opening of the referees' seminar, an almost week-long event which will help football's governing body decide on the final list of those who will officiate at this year's World Cup in Russia.

The event was attended by the 2002 World Cup final referee Pierluigi

Collina, now president of the FIFA referees' committee.

He urged the assembled referees to retain their "hunger" to be selected for Russia.

"The months between today and the day when the World Cup in Russia kicks off, this period is everything," he said.

The referees will practice using the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system during their stay in Doha, said Massimo Busacca, FIFA's head of refereeing, ahead of its expected use in Russia.

Asked how many referees would be selected for the 2018 World Cup, Busacca said FIFA was looking for "quality" not quantity.

## Dimdex 2018 to bring together top defence officials, experts

### By Ramesh Mathew

Staff Reporter

Delegations, companies and defence institutions from across the world have confirmed participation in the 6th edition of the Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (Dimdex 2018) to be held at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) from March 12-14.

The expo and conference are held under the patronage of His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

The Commander of the Qatar Emiri Naval Force, Major General Abdullah bin Hassan al-Sulaiti, told a diplomatic briefing yesterday that the organisers were expecting the participation of several high maritime and defence del-

egations, including defence ministers, chief of staffs, senior serving officials and defence experts.

The senior official also said that a number of naval warships were expected to call on the new Hamad Port as part of the event. "We are also looking forward to meeting VIP delegations and holding discussions on several vital issues concerning maritime security and defence during the three-day conference," said Maj Gen al-Sulaiti.

Dimdex chairman Staff Brigadier (Sea) Abdulbaqi S al-Ansari said there has been a substantial rise in the number of participants at the expo since its start more than 10 years ago. "While there were only 80 companies when the event began in 2008, the past edition in 2016 had the participation of 180 exhibitors," he said, adding that more than 380 official VIP delegations



Major General Abdullah bin Hassan al-Sulaiti (centre), Staff Brigadier (Sea) Abdulbaqi S al-Ansari, Staff Brigadier (Sea) Tariq Khalid al-Obaidly and Captain (Sea) Hamad Rashid al-Marri and MENC producer Tom Sawyer yesterday at the diplomatic briefing about Dimdex 2018. **PICTURE:** Jayan Orma

were present in the last five editions to gether.

The official also reminded that over the years Dimdex has become an es-

tablished and highly anticipated global event, consisting of the Middle East and

North African region's leading maritime defence expo and conference.

While expressing satisfaction at the growth of the expo over the last one decade, al-Ansari hoped the event would provide participants with a wealth of opportunities to grow and forge new partnerships with leading businesses and key procurement decision makers.

Qatar Armed Forces International Co-operation Department head and the Middle East Naval Commanders Conference (MENC) director Staff Brigadier (Sea) Tariq Khalid al-Obaidly said this year's conference was designed to promote international military collaboration and exchange to accomplish global peace and security, alongside the protection of shores, borders and assets. MENC producer Tom Sawyer and Captain (Sea) Hamad Rashid al-Marri also spoke.



## Emir receives Sierra Leone president



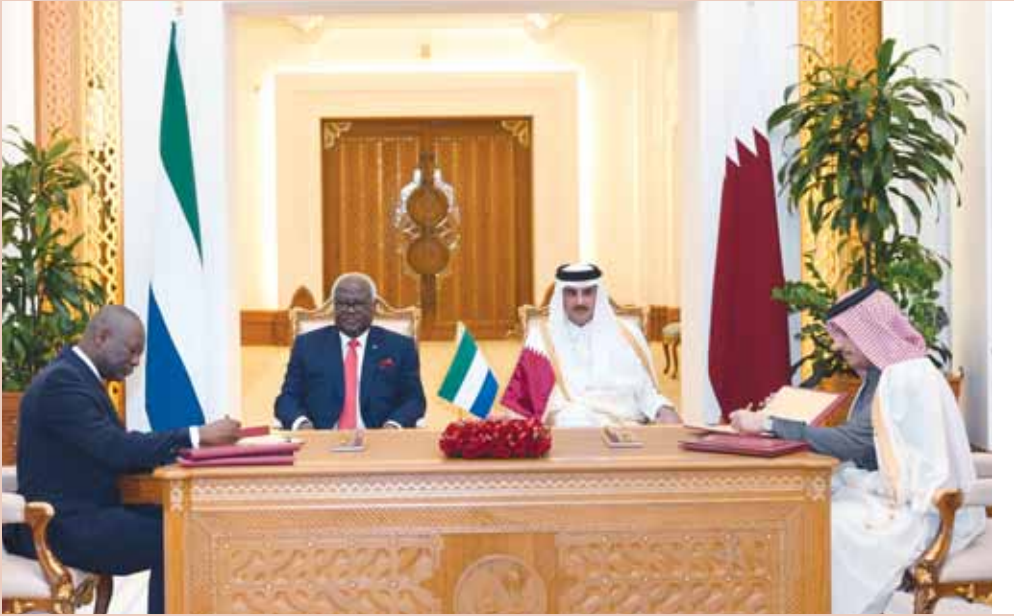
President of Sierra Leone, Ernest Bai Koroma, accompanied by His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, reviews a guard of honour at the Emiri Diwan yesterday.



His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani with the President of Sierra Leone, Ernest Bai Koroma, at the official reception ceremony at the Emiri Diwan yesterday.



His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani receiving the President of Sierra Leone, Ernest Bai Koroma, at the Emiri Diwan yesterday.



His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and the President of Sierra Leone, Ernest Bai Koroma, witness the signing of an agreement between the governments of Qatar and Sierra Leone at the Emiri Diwan yesterday.



His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani meeting the Sierra Leone delegation at the Emiri Diwan yesterday.

## Council okays amendment of Investment Free Zones Law

**QNA**  
Doha

The Advisory Council held yesterday its regular weekly session under the chairmanship of HE the Speaker Ahmed bin Abdullah bin Zaid al-Mahmoud.

At the outset of the session, the Advisory Council reviewed the report of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee on Decree Law No 21 of 2017 amending some provisions of Law No 34 of 2005 on Investment Free Zones.

The Speaker stressed the importance of the amendments to this law, which will enhance the investment climate in the country, push the economic development, open new horizons to the private sector and benefit citizens and foreign investors.

HE al-Mahmoud added that the amendment of the law comes within the framework of keeping abreast of developments and economic changes internally and externally.

It also responds to the objectives and principles of Qatar Vision 2030.

HE noted that the economic growth witnessed by Qatar and the rapid pace of the development movement in the country as well as the confidence gained by the Qatari economy regionally and internationally imposed these amendments, under which the Free Zones Authority will be granted administrative and financial autonomy, as well as expanding its powers to issue licenses to companies registered in the Free Zone.

After extensive discussions, the Advisory Council approved the decree as stated and decided to submit its recommendations thereon to the Cabinet.

The Advisory Council also discussed in its meeting today a draft law amending some provisions of Law No 25 of 2005 on the Commercial Registry and a draft law on the unified economic registry.

The Council decided to refer the two draft laws to the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee for further study and report.

## Qatar-Kuwait ties reviewed



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met the ambassador of Kuwait to Qatar Hafeez Mohamed al-Ajmi in Doha yesterday. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral relations and ways of developing them, in addition to matters of common concern.

## ‘Qatar-China relations developing constantly’

**QNA**  
Beijing

Qatar's ambassador to China Sultan bin Salmeen al-Mansouri said that the relations between Qatar and China are developing constantly thanks to the great efforts and the continuous support of the two countries' leaderships.

In an interview with Chinese news agency (Xinhua), ambassador al-Mansouri noted that the strategic partnership between the two countries was established in November 2014 when His Highness the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani visited China, opening a new era of the bilateral relations.

Thanks to the efforts and the support of the two leaderships, the relations between the two countries developed constantly and resulted



Qatar's ambassador to China Sultan bin Salmeen al-Mansouri.

in many memorandums of understanding and agreements in the fields of education, sports, investment, finance and others, stressing that the ambitions are still high to continue work and coordination between the

two countries to achieve further accomplishments in the coming years.

The Qatari ambassador said that the “Belt and Road” initiative serves the interests of all countries.

This led Qatar to support the initiative when it was introduced by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013, and confirmed that it is a useful initiative for China and the countries of Asia and the world.

Therefore, Qatar was one of the first countries to sign a co-operation agreement to join the initiative.

Ambassador Sultan bin Salmeen al-Mansouri said that Qatar has entered into the mechanisms that establish this initiative like joining the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank which is a very important mechanism, in addition to the establishment of the Renminbi Clearing Centre in Qatar in 2015 and is the first of its kind in the Middle East.



# Invitation

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by  
**Dr. Axel Wabenhorst**  
His Excellency The Ambassador of Australia to the State of Qatar

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## Emir meets Italian interior minister



His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met the Minister of Interior of Italy, Marco Minetti, and his accompanying delegation, at his Emiri Diwan yesterday. During the meeting, they reviewed relations between Qatar and Italy as well as the latest regional developments. The meeting was attended by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa al-Thani.

## PM, Italian minister discuss security



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa al-Thani held a meeting with the visiting Minister of Interior of Italy Marco Minetti in Doha yesterday. During the meeting, the Prime Minister discussed with Italian interior minister relations between Qatar and Italy and means of boosting them, especially in the joint security fields. They also discussed a number of regional and international issues related to current security challenges. Following the meeting, the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior and Italian interior minister witnessed the exchange of ratification documents regarding a memorandum of understanding on combating crime between the governments of Qatar and Italy.

# Qatar Airways to start direct flights to Hatay

New route reflects the close relationship between Qatar and Turkey

Qatar Airways' non-stop service to the Turkish city of Hatay will commence on April 4, it was announced yesterday. The new three-times weekly route to the airline's fifth gateway in Turkey will be served by an Airbus A320, featuring 12 seats in Business Class and 132 seats in Economy Class. Hatay, also known as Antakya, was one of the largest

cities in the Roman Empire, and is known for its many well-preserved ancient Roman mosaics, as well as its traditional products including olive oil soap, fine silk and delicious local cuisine. "We are delighted to announce the launch of this new route, which reflects the close relationship between Qatar and Turkey," Qatar Airways Group chief executive Akbar al-Baker said. "Turkey itself is continuing to grow in popularity with our passengers for both business and leisure purposes,

attracting travellers who wish to enjoy its rich culture," he noted. "We are delighted to offer yet another gateway into this spectacular country, and to provide even more choice to our passengers who wish to experience all that Turkey has to offer," al-Baker added. Qatar Airways currently operates direct flights to Istanbul's Sabiha Gokcen Airport three times daily, to Istanbul Ataturk Airport 10 times weekly, to Adana Sakirpasa Airport three times weekly and a daily

service to Ankara's Esenboga Airport. While enjoying the award-winning in-flight service on board, passengers travelling to Hatay will also have access to Oryx One, Qatar Airways' in-flight entertainment system. It offers the latest blockbuster movies, TV box sets, music, games and much more. Qatar Airways connects Turkey to over 150 destinations via its award-winning Hamad International Airport and also offers seamless connecting flights from East, Australia and the Middle East and beyond.

## QC granted full membership of Start Network

'Start Network', the largest international humanitarian alliance, is holding a celebratory meeting today in the British capital, London to present the full-membership certificate to Qatar Charity (QC).

In a statement, QC said it has been included to the network as the first humanitarian organisation in the Middle East and North Africa.

QC's delegation, headed by CEO Yousuf bin Ahmed al-Kuwari, along with international co-operation executive director Mohamed al-Ghamdi and follow-up director Khalid Aounallah, in addition to Fahad al-Nuaimi from the Regulatory Authority for Charitable Activities, will be attending the ceremony.

From Start Network, the ceremony will be attended by its vice chairman Matthew Carter, CEO Sean Lowrie, and a number of its managers and officers.

QC joined Start Network in February 2016 as a participating member and in October 2017, and it was granted full membership to be the first non-governmental organisation in the Middle East and North Africa.

QC was recognised for its capabilities and experiences, as well as playing a vital role, as a charity institution in the regional and international levels.

The UK-based 'Start Network' includes 42 national and international aid agencies and humanitarian organisations from five continents and provides quick and effective assistance to crises-affected areas.

'Start Network' members account for more than 60% of the actors involved in the humanitarian work in the world and it is funded by the largest global donor agencies.

## President of Ingushetia arrives in Doha



President of the Russian Republic of Ingushetia Yunus-bek Yevkurov arrived in Doha yesterday on an official visit to Qatar. President Yevkurov and the accompanying delegation were received at Hamad International Airport by HE the Minister of Municipality and Environment Mohamed bin Abdullah al-Rumaihi and the ambassador of the Russian Federation to Qatar Nurmakhmad Kholov.

# Registration continues for Muaither health centre

The Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) has announced that registration is continuing at Muaither Health Centre, expected to be opened during the first quarter of this year.

Residents of Muaither 55, Abu Sidra, Abu Al Hiran, Al Muraa and Al Saliya areas are eligible to register at the new health centre. PHCC also encourages citizens who wish to transfer their medical files from Abu Nakhla, Al Rayyan and Abu Bakr Al Siddiq health centres to Muaither Health Centre. They can apply online at <http://10.30.23.84/eservices2/index.php/location>

or visit their health centres to complete the procedures.

Dr Hiyam al-Sada, western regional chief, confirmed that Muaither Health Centre provides health services that focus on health promotion. The health centre has a gym, a swimming pool, massage and steam services, sauna, as well as family medicine clinics and special clinics equipped with the latest equipment.

She added that the health centre provides comprehensive health services such as family medicine clinics, a vaccination clinic and non-communicable diseases clinic, a pregnant

women clinic, postnatal clinics, a healthy women clinic, health educator for women's and children's health, a sonar for pregnant women, healthy child clinic, and a smoking cessation clinic. In addition, there is also a medical commission and travel vaccination clinic.

There are also laboratories, pharmacy, radiology, dental clinic, therapeutic feeding clinic, physiotherapy and early screening services for breast and bowel cancer, an eye clinic, optics, a nose, ear, throat clinic, a dermatology clinic, regular radiotherapy services and a panorama.

# Several international consultants to visit HMC this month

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) will welcome a number of visiting consultants from various medical specialties during February.

Dr Javid Gaziev, an oncology and haematology specialist and clinical director of the International Centre for Transplantation in Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Anaemia in Rome, Italy, will visit until February 9.

Prof Michel Chammas, a plastic surgery specialist and head of the Department of Surgery at the University Hospital of Montpellier in Montpellier, France, will visit until February 9 and Dr Jean-Jacques Abitbol, an orthopaedic specialist and co-founder of the California Spine Group in San Diego, California, US, will visit from February 9 to 12.

Dr Tony Tannoury, an orthopaedic surgeon with the Boston Medical Centre in Boston, Massachusetts, US, will visit from February 9 to 12; Dr Ahmed al-Bahrani, a general surgery specialist with the West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust and



Prof Nuhad K Ibrahim

East & North Hertfordshire NHS Trust in Hertfordshire, England, UK, will visit from February 10 to 18 and Dr Daniel Davies, an internist in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, US, who is affiliated with Portsmouth Regional Hospital and specialises in geriatrics and the assessment and management of delirium in the elderly, will visit from February 10 to 16.



Dr Erik Wilson

Dr Erik Wilson, medical director of bariatric surgery at the UT MIST Centre for Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery and a fellowship trained laparoscopic general surgeon from Bellaire, Texas, US, will visit from February 11 to 16. Prof Andreas Kulozik, medical director of the Department of Paediatric Oncology, Haematology and Immunology at the

Heidelberg University Hospital in Heidelberg, Germany, will visit from February 24 to March 1.

Prof Nuhad K Ibrahim, an oncology and haematology specialist with the Department of Breast Medical Oncology, Division of Cancer Medicine, the MD Anderson Cancer Centre in Houston, Texas, US, will visit from February 25 to March 2.

Other experts are scheduled to visit throughout the year as part of HMC's focus on hosting highly-respected physicians and surgeons from around the world. Hosting visiting international consultants who are experts in their field is in line with HMC's commitment to providing specialised medical services to the people of Qatar.

Members of the public wishing to book an appointment with one of the visiting consultants are advised to discuss this option with their physician. If the doctor agrees that an appointment with a visiting consultant is appropriate, they will provide a referral.

# Karwa taxi fare revision to meet high operational cost: Mowasalat

Taxi fares in the country were revised recently in view of high operational costs such as fuel prices, Mowasalat Co (Karwa) has said.

The new tariff came into effect on February 1.

In a statement yesterday, the company said due to high operational costs comprising "vehicle maintenance, fuel prices and other support services, and after the approval of the competent authorities, the Karwa taxi tariff has been reviewed and updated to be commensurate with operational requirements and support services".

"Since 2004, Mowasalat has been continually ensuring and providing the highest-quality services with cutting-edge technology and efficient prices for public transport users in the State"

This has been done to "ensure continuity of the highest levels and standards of services provided by Mowasalat for passengers", it stressed.

As reported in Gulf Times recently, among the key elements of the new fare chart is a technology service charge of QR1. While the minimum taxi fare per trip is QR10, this charge takes the minimum payable amount to QR11.

Other changes have also been made to the fare structure (see chart).

The new tariff sticker has been installed on the side windows of all Karwa and franchise cabs, making it easier for passengers to view the revised rates.

Mowasalat said it has under its umbrella - along with the taxi franchisees - a fleet of 4,000 taxis as well as a bus fleet of about 4,200 vehicles that are operated with a workforce of around 7,000 employees from 54 countries.

"Since 2004, Mowasalat has been continually ensuring and providing the highest-quality services with cutting-edge technology and efficient prices for public transport users in the State. It utilises a modern taxi fleet that is renewed regularly to meet service requirements, and

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<b>Standard Tariffs</b>		<b>التعرفة الأساسية</b>	
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<b>Minimum Taxi Fare Per Trip is QR. 10/- الحد الأدنى للتعرفة: ١٠ ريال للرحلة الواحدة</b>			
<b>Flag Fall</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>بداية العداد</b>	
<b>Rate / Km inside Doha Day Time</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>السعر للكيلومتر داخل الدوحة (نهاراً)</b>	
<b>Rate / Km inside Doha Night Time</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>السعر للكيلومتر داخل الدوحة (ليلاً)</b>	
<b>Rate / Km outside Doha Day / Night</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>السعر للكيلومتر خارج الدوحة (نهاراً/ليلاً)</b>	
<b>Extra Tariffs</b>		<b>التعرفة الإضافية</b>	
<b>Airport Pick up Flag Fall</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>بداية العداد من المطار</b>	
<b>Telephone Booking Charge:</b>		<b>تكلفة فتح العداد من خلال الحجز الهاتفي:</b>	
- within city	<b>5</b>	<b>الرحلة داخل مدينة الدوحة</b>	
- from city to airport	<b>8</b>	<b>الرحلة من مدينة الدوحة إلى المطار</b>	
<b>Technology service charge</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>رسوم الخدمات التقنية</b>	
<b>Waiting charge per 15 min.</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>أجرة الانتظار لكل ١٥ دقيقة</b>	
<b>Notice</b>		<b>ملاحظة</b>	
<b>If Meter is not operational, your trip is Free</b>		<b>في حال عدم تشغيل العداد فالرحلة مجانية</b>	
<b>Please make sure to take your belongings before you exit. Mowasalat will not be held responsible for lost items.</b>		<b>يرجى التأكد من عدم ترك أية أغراض شخصية عند مغادرة المركبة، ولا تتحمل الشركة مسؤولية فقدان أو تلف أي أغراض شخصية.</b>	
  			
<b>Feed back &amp; complaints: 800-TAXI</b> <b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:customercare@mowasalat.com">customercare@mowasalat.com</a></b>		<b>للإفادات أو الشكاوى: 800-TAXI</b> <b><a href="mailto:customercare@mowasalat.com">customercare@mowasalat.com</a>, البريد الإلكتروني.</b>	

applies an advanced maintenance process to ensure passengers' safety on roads," the statement noted.

Further, Mowasalat said it operates with a "professional and highly trained team of drivers and supervisors", and applies "carefully calculated and cost-effective rates that are considered highly competent and adequate for the Qatari market".

The Mowasalat Operations Department applies international standards for Karwa taxis, the company said, as well as the highest global standards for "ensuring and controlling the quality of taxis, drivers, ranks, franchise taxi management, vehicle registration and the drivers' qualification process".

All Karwa taxis are equipped

with tamper-proof meters, which operate automatically once passengers get into the vehicle, it added.

Mowasalat has set up and developed a unified call centre for handling taxi booking services 24/7 to meet customers' requirements. In addition, it has developed a mobile application for both Android and iPhone handsets, serving more than 160,000 passengers per month to facilitate taxi and limousine booking, the statement points out.

Besides, Mowasalat has provided a customer service counter at the Arrivals Terminal of Hamad International Airport to serve visitors, citizens and residents round the clock. The counter facilitates Karwa taxi and limousine booking so that customers can reach their destinations easily and safely.



# QU holds orientation event for new students

The Admissions Department at Qatar University (QU) yesterday launched an orientation event for 1,121 new students for Spring 2018.

The event saw students registering into their respective programmes and familiarising with the university, its programmes, academic and extra-curricular activities, policies, services, and campus resources.

The three-day event is designed to welcome the new batch of students into the QU community, to assist them with any personal, financial, and housing questions or issues, and to give them the chance to get involved in the QU community.

The new students comprise 375 males and 746 females. They got acquainted with their colleagues and toured the campus and its facilities. They got the chance to meet with the deans, associate deans, and administrators of their colleges. The event also included an exhibition featuring 12 booths and showcasing the various services offered by the University.

QU vice president for student affairs, Dr Khalid al-Khanji welcomed the newly-admitted students and wished them a successful academic journey.

He said: "We are here to assist and support all students to ensure they have an optimal academic experience. This significant event contributes to enhancing the students' introduction to university life and to helping them to become familiar with the challenging and exciting opportunities that the



Some of the new students at the event yesterday.

University offers.”

The Admissions Department noted that the new student orientation is the starting point for all new students to be fully prepared from their very first day of the semes-

ter. The orientation provides them with the opportunity to meet their college deans and department heads, and get to know them closely to know whom to seek help from during their academic journey.

The students also get the opportunity to seek advice from current QU students and learn about various academic support and services available to them. The orientation exercises will conclude tomorrow.

# Northwestern University provost visits Qatar campus

A delegation of senior administrators, including Northwestern University provost Jonathan Holloway, visited the Qatar campus, NU-Q. Provost Holloway held a Town Hall session with the NU-Q community during the visit.

"This visit provided an opportunity for the NU-Q community to hear directly from the university's chief academic officer, as well as for the university's senior academic administrators to observe the progress of NU-Q," said Everette E Dennis, dean and CEO.

The delegation accompanying the provost included Lindsay Chase-Lansdale, vice provost for academics; Jake Julia, vice provost for administration and chief of staff; Ron Braeutigam, associate provost for undergraduate education; Jabbar Bennett, associate provost and chief diversity officer; Andrea Bueschel, associate provost for strategy and policy; Dwight Hamilton, associate vice president for equity and Title IX coordinator; and Lee West, director of undergraduate education.



Holloway: discussed the university's mission and vision in a Town Hall session at NU-Q.

western from Yale University last August, explained Northwestern's plans to enhance the student life experience, online education, define a global agenda, and reaffirm his team's role in providing Northwestern's students and faculty with the support they needed to excel.

On NU-Q, Holloway said that he was "very impressed with NU-Q students, who shared the

same ambition and drive as students in Evanston."

Having been to NU-Q twice before, he added that this visit developed a sense of “integrity towards the enterprise.”

During their two-day visit to NU-Q, the provost and his delegation met with faculty and students to discuss academia, research, and student life. The purpose of these discussions is to build on the collaboration between the campuses and to ensure NU-Q's plans are aligned with Northwestern's objectives and global agenda.

Holloway, who serves as the co-chair of NU-Q's Joint Advisory Board, is responsible for overseeing educational policies and academic priorities at Northwestern.

Prior to joining NU-Q, Holloway served as the dean of Yale College and was the Edmund S Morgan Professor of African American Studies, History, and American Studies. Holloway began his academic career at the University of California, San Diego, before joining the faculty at Yale in 1999 and becoming a full professor in 2004.

## Fatima Khalifa first Qatari postgraduate in pharmacy

Qatar University College of Pharmacy (QU-CPH) has graduated the first Qatari postgraduate in MSc Pharmacy, it was announced yesterday.

Fatima Khalifa M A al-Sulaiti presented her thesis titled "Clinical and Pharmacokinetic Evaluation of Optimal Monitoring Parameters and Sampling Schemes for Vancomycin Therapeutic Drug Monitoring (TDM) in Qatar". The project involved multiple phases and robust research methods across three hospitals in Qatar (Hamad General, Al Wakrah

and Al Khor Hospitals) in an effort to determine the best approaches for vancomycin dosing optimisation in Qatar's heterogeneous population. The study explored the quality of routine vancomycin monitoring services in Qatar and compared the superiority of different vancomycin therapeutic drug monitoring approaches. The project was supervised by CPH associate professor of Clinical Pharmacy and Practice Dr Ahmed Awaisu and co-supervised by CPH associate professor of Pharmacoeconomics Dr

Daoud Al-Badriyeh, CPH assistant professor of Clinical Pharmacy  
Dr Hazem Elewa and Abb Vie Inc principal scientist of Pharmacometrics Dr Ahmed Nader.  
Al-Sulaiti noted that gram-positive bacterial infections such as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* infections are associated with high mortality rate, prolonged length of hospitalisation, and increased healthcare cost. She highlighted that these infections require appropriate and optimal management with safe and effective antibiotics.

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The story unfolds



The Drama Theatre at Katara – the Cultural Village Foundation, in co-operation with the Association of Memory Arts and Heritage, presented the third and final round of the Katara Heritage Operetta shows over the weekend. The last show – The Story of a Homeland – was staged on Saturday and it was attended by a large audience, the Katara said in a press statement. The Katara Heritage Operetta entailed a series of three musical plays representing the history of Qatar, its social elements, unique cultural identity and the main developments that have influenced the country through its history. The previous shows were based on the themes Al Ghaos (Diving) and The Story of Qatar.



Difi wins IFFD Family Award

The Doha International Family Institute (Difi), a member of Qatar Foundation, has been awarded the 2018 IFFD Family Award by the board of the International Federation for Family Development (IFFD), an NGO with general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc) at the United Nations (UN).

The IFFD Awards are presented to persons or entities recognised for the promotion of family perspective policies during the past year and for best appreciation and promotion of family values around the world. The 2018 award was also granted to the Hungarian-based National Association of Large Families. Ignacio Socias, director, International Relations, IFFD, said, “Difi has contributed to ad-

vocacy on family issues through the organisation of several international conferences and through its special consultative status with the UN Ecosoc, with very specific recommendations to integrate a family perspective into national policy-making.”

Sheikha Aliya bint Ahmed al-Thani, permanent representative of Qatar to the UN, presented Difi with the award during the IFFD annual briefing held at UN Headquarters in New York. Noor al-Malki al-Jehani, executive director, Difi, received the award and thanked IFFD for recognising Difi’s work and for its key role in promoting family perspective.

“We are proud to receive the 2018 IFFD Family Award, which recognises the work done by NGOs to strengthen families around the

world. Difi is committed to make families a priority for policy-makers through our advocacy and outreach at a national, regional, and international level,” al-Jehani said.

The IFFD Family Awards have been celebrated for the last six years. Previous awardees include the governments of Malta and Malaysia, and the UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilisations. This year, the awards were presented at a special event during the 56th Commission for Social Development held at the UN Headquarters in New York recently.

The International Federation for Family Development is a non-governmental, independent, and non-profit federation. Its primary mission is to support families through training.

Aamal unveils Pit-stop

Aamal Company has said its subsidiary Aamal Trading and Distribution, an official distributor of Total Lubricants, had launched Total’s first truck Pit-stop service centre, in collaboration with Al Sraiya Trading and Contracting Qatar, and Total Marketing Qatar. The truck Pit-stop, located on street 25 in the Industrial Area, will offer premium services including oil change, wash and mechanical repairs for trucks, equipment

and light vehicles, a spokesman for Aamal Company said in a communique sent to the Qatar Stock Exchange. As this new truck Pit-stop is considered part of Aamal Trading’s ordinary course of business operations, it also reflects the company’s commitment to better serve clients, and continuously seek new ways to enhance the accessibility of its services in line with its objective to be the leading specialist partner-

of-choice across the full range of vehicle services. “The launch of this new truck Pit-stop service also reflects the strength of our partnership with Total and we look forward to further developing our relationship with them to better serve the market and meet the growing demand for high-quality automotive products and services in Qatar,” according to Syed Rashid Hassan, General Manager of Aamal Trading and Distribution.

Global scholars attend summit on Indian Ocean region at GU-Q

World-class scholars from across the globe gathered to trace the social currents of the Indian Ocean region at a recent event at Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q). Hosted by GU-Q’s expert faculty, the symposium aimed to explore arts, ideologies, and identities in the macro-region.

The event was hosted in the background of the fact that the Indian Ocean is an important area of study, as the diverse region connects the Red Sea to the African continent, the Middle East, the Asian sub-continent, and the Far East.

GU-Q’s faculty are driving in-depth study of the region with research that is at the cutting edge of theoretical and ethnographic fields.

“The Indian Ocean has been a theatre of human interaction throughout world history, with extensive challenges arising from retelling this history from the perspective of the sea. It is these very challenges that make the study of the Indian Ocean so fascinating,” said GU-Q dean Ahmad Dallal.

“I hope we here at GU-Q will be able to continue our contribution to this important topic of research.”

From the Horn of Africa to Southeast Asia, the event took a close look at a number of topics related to the countries bordering the Indian Ocean. These included the relations between Arabian and African nations,



The GU-Q event featured participants from across the globe.

Russia’s interests in Somalia in the 1970s, and Cold War considerations in Tanzania.

The symposium featured respected scholars from institutions including Columbia University, Cambridge University, the University of Mumbai, and the University of Cape Town,

among others. The keynote speech was given by Dr Prita Meier, assistant professor of African art and architectural history at New York University, who explored the history of photography on the Swahili Coast. The event is the latest in a series of research initiatives

and workshops on the region at GU-Q. It follows from a previous symposium in April 2017, and GU-Q’s annual faculty conference, which was convened under the theme of ‘The Liberal State and its Alternatives in the Indian Ocean World’ in March last year.

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Ooredoo tv launches two new 4K channels

Ooredoo tv has introduced two new 4K channels aimed to provide content in the highest definition for customers, Ooredoo announced yesterday.

The two new channels, Travelxp 4K and Love Nature 4K, will be available as part of the ‘Ooredoo tv Essentials’ package meaning that it will be available for every Ooredoo tv subscriber. The Love Nature 4K channel was designed to bring audiences closer to the beauty and wonder of nature, sharing awe-inspiring stories and shining a light on the fight for survival in an ever-changing world. Love Nature 4K offers the largest library of family-friendly 4K wildlife and nature content in the world, which audiences can access on channel number 444 via Ooredoo tv.

The Travelxp 4K channel is the world’s first 4K HDR channel, and features world-class travel programmes filmed across the globe. Travelxp 4K aims to provide viewers an unprecedented viewing experience, with cinema-like picture quality combined with its broader range of colours, higher frame rates and greater luminosity. The Travelxp 4K is available on channel number 466 via Ooredoo tv. Ooredoo director of PR and Corporate Communications Manar Khalifa al-Muraikhi said: “Ooredoo was proud to offer the first 4K television channel in the region in 2016 and we’re continuing to invest in this new platform. We hope these two crystal-clear channels educate and delight Qatar’s homes.” Ooredoo tv is the best next-generation television service for Qatar and offers features such as 4K resolution, time shift, Android apps, parental control, thousands of hours of on-demand content and much more.

QIC, Qatar Rail foster agreement

Qatar Insurance (QIC) Group, Qatar’s leading insurance powerhouse, and Qatar Rail have entered into an agreement, which allows QIC to use the exterior façades of the Doha Metro’s pedestrian bridge in the West Bay area to promote its services.

The agreement seeks to highlight QIC Group’s endeavour towards global expansion, diversification and drive to maintain its position as a key player in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The agreement was signed by QIC Deputy Group president and chief executive (MENA) Salem al-Mannai in the presence of deputy chief executive CEO of Qatar Rail, Hamad Ibrahim al-Bishri and other senior officials.

The total number of pedestrian bridges in Doha Metro projects is 10 and located in prime hubs such as Qatar University, Hamad In-



Officials of QIC and Qatar Rail at the signing ceremony.

HEC Paris hosts event on women’s leadership development

HEC Paris will host a women-only event to highlight women’s leadership and invite discussion on developing female leaders of the future. The exclusive event will be held at the Marriott Marquis Hotel starting from

2.30pm on February 18. It will be led by Prof Randall White, affiliate professor at HEC Paris, and Dr Sandra Shullman, senior lecturer at HEC Paris. Prof White is co-author of *Breaking the Glass Ceiling*, a ground-breaking book about

the study and patterns of women’s leadership development. Dr Shullman is co-founder and current chair of the Women’s Leadership Institute for Women in Psychology at the American Psychological Association. Prof White

ternational Airport, West Bay and Wakrah. These bridges aim to ensure traffic safety and facilitate access to stations. “This new development marks an important step towards being ranked amongst the top 50 global insurance companies as we aspire to expand our global franchise.

“It also brings to the fore our unwavering commitment towards achieving the Qatar National Vision 2030 and delivering a sustainable future with our trusted partners such as Qatar Rail,” al-Mannai said. Abdulla Abdulaziz al-Subaie, managing director and chief executive of Qatar Rail said this kind of agreements supports the financial sustainability of the project and contributes to economic growth.

“The Doha Metro project has many aspects besides being a transport project; leading companies can seize the various business opportunities available in the project to reach a wider market segments,” he said.

# **CONDOLENCES**

The Chairman and Board of Directors



extend their heartfelt condolences to

**Mr. Khalid Bin Ahmed Abdulla Issa Al Mannai**

**Mr. Abdulla Bin Ahmed Abdulla Issa Al Mannai**

**Mr. Waleed Bin Ahmed Abdulla Issa Al Mannai**

**and**

**all Mannai family members**

**on the sad demise of their**

**Father**

**AHMED BIN ABDULLA ISSA AL MANNAI**

May Allah rest the departed soul in peace and give  
grace and fortitude to the bereaved family.



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يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمَطْمَئِنَّةُ (أَرَأَيْتِ إِذْ رَأَيْتِ رَأْسُكَ زَاوِيَةً تُرَابٍ مِمَّا تَرَكَ آدَمُ وَنُوحٌ وَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ وَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَ قُلُوبُهُمْ زَاوِيَةٌ فَاسْتَخِرْتِ رَبَّكَ فَبِأَيِّ ذَاتٍ عَصَيْتِ أَلَمْ تَكُنْ مِنَ الْغَاثِ)  
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## CONDOLENCES

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We convey our heartfelt condolences to his sons

**Mr. Khalid Ahmed Abdulla Issa Al Mannai**

**Mr. Abdulla Ahmed Abdulla Issa Al Mannai**

**Mr. Waleed Ahmed Abdulla Issa Al Mannai**

and

**to all the members of the Mannai family**

May Allah Almighty rest his soul in peace and give comfort to his bereaved family to bear this great loss.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

# SA party holds crunch talks on Zuma future

By Susan Njanji, AFP  
Johannesburg

South Africa's ANC party yesterday held an emergency meeting to discuss whether Jacob Zuma should stay in office as the embattled president reportedly refused to resign.

Zuma, whose tenure has been engulfed by corruption scandals, is due to deliver the annual state of the nation address on Thursday, despite growing calls for him to quit.

The African National Congress (ANC)'s 26-member national working committee meet at Luthuli House, the party headquarters in Johannesburg.

Scuffles erupted outside the building as Zuma supporters clashed with rival ANC activists with at least one woman kicked and beaten with sticks, an AFP reporter witnessed.

Some ANC members are pushing for Cyril Ramaphosa, the new head of the party and the nation's deputy president, to replace Zuma, 75, as president immediately.

But Zuma loyalists have said that the president should complete his second and final term in office, which would end when elections are held next year. ANC spokeswoman Khutsela Diko said that meeting started mid-afternoon and confirmed it was due to discuss Zuma.

Yesterday's meeting cannot directly oust the president. But it has the power to convene the national executive committee, which would be able to "recall" him, effectively forcing him to step down.

Zuma's presidency has been dominated by corruption scandals.

He faces several court cases, including over 783 payments he allegedly received linked to an arms deal before he came to power in 2009.

Many graft allegations against Zuma have centred on the wealthy Gupta family, who are accused of unfairly obtaining lucrative govern-



Supporters of the African National Congress Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa hold placards and chant slogans outside the ANC party headquarters in Johannesburg, yesterday.

ment contracts and even being able to choose ministerial appointments.

Mcebisi Ndletyana, politics professor at the University of Johannesburg, described Zuma as a "major liability" for the ANC.

"I doubt that he will go quietly because his presidency has been troublesome — he has essentially used it to protect himself and evade accountability," Ndletyana told AFP.

"When he will no longer have lar-

gesse to dish out, he becomes complete vulnerable and that increases his chances of imprisonment."

Julius Malema, a former ally who left the ANC to form the opposition Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)

party, said the president had refused to resign at late-night talks on Sunday.

"He told them to take a decision to remove him if they so wish to do so because he didn't do anything wrong to the country," Malema wrote on Twitter, without naming his sources.

The EFF, which has often disrupted parliament, has demanded that Zuma does not deliver the state of the nation address in Cape Town on Thursday.

The main opposition Democratic Alliance party has called for the event to be postponed.

Zuma's hold on the ANC was shaken when his chosen successor — his former wife Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma — lost out to Ramaphosa in a closely-fought race to be party leader in December.

On January 26, Ramaphosa said that Zuma was "naturally feeling anxious" about the transition of power.

The process would be handled "very carefully," Ramaphosa vowed.

Ramaphosa is looking to revive the economy and tackle record unemployment before the 2019 elections that come amid falling public support for ANC.

Zuma, in power since 2009, could leave office either by resigning, through losing a motion of no-confidence in parliament or impeachment proceedings. He could also be "recalled" by the ANC.

Ramaphosa, 65, is a former trade unionist who led talks to end white-minority rule in the early 1990s and then became a multi-millionaire businessman before returning to politics.

He has admitted that there has been serious corruption within the government and pledged to clean up state companies such as debt-laden power monopoly Eskom.

The ANC, which has ruled since 1994 when Nelson Mandela won the first multi-racial election, recorded its worst-ever results in 2016 local polls.

## Two Kenya broadcasters back on air

Reuters  
Nairobi

Two Kenyan television channels shut down by the government over their coverage of the political opposition resumed partial broadcasting yesterday, although a third channel remained off the air.

The unprecedented act of censorship sparked a local and international backlash against the government of President Uhuru Kenyatta, who won an election in October.

It also reinvigorated an opposition that had appeared unsure of its next step after a highly publicised rally last week at which leader Raila Odinga symbolically inaugurated himself as president.

The NTV, KTN News and Citizen TV channels were taken off the air last Tuesday, hours before they were due to broadcast Odinga's event.

The United States, the United Nations and former colonial ruler Britain strongly criticised the government's censorship.

The government ignored a court order issued on Thursday to restore the stations, prompting activist Okiya Omtatah to file a case yesterday seeking the arrest of officials for contempt of court.

Police yesterday also teargassed demonstrators demanding the stations reopen as they tried to march on government offices.

It was unclear why the government switched back on the transmitters.

A spokesman for the government was not available for comment.

"There's been no form of communication from the government," said Larry Madowo of NTV, which resumed broadcasting on pay-to-view channels although its free-to-air channel, which uses different transmitters, was still off.

KTN News was back on its free-to-air channel.

Madowo noted the transmitters for Citizen TV were in a different place, which might explain the delay.

Odinga's symbolic inauguration in the heart of the capital of East Africa's wealthiest economy was intended as a direct challenge to Kenyatta.

Odinga insists he, not Kenyatta, was the true winner of a disputed presidential election last August.

The Supreme Court later nullified the August election on procedural grounds and Kenyatta won a repeat poll in October after Odinga boycotted it, claiming it would not be fair.

Since the symbolic inauguration, Odinga and his supporters have repeatedly promised to outline their next step, only to postpone the unveiling of their plan.

Most of their statements have focused on the brief detention of three opposition politicians who took part in Odinga's ceremony, which occurred peacefully after the government withdrew police from the site.

Around 100 people were killed during the protracted election season, most of them Odinga supporters shot by the police.

Odinga supporters say they are angered by police impunity, persistent government corruption and the perceived neglect of large swathes of the country by the central government.

## Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria, Cameroon despite 'defeated' claims

AFP  
Maiduguri

Boko Haram fighters stormed a village in northeast Nigeria and murdered two civilians, while six people were killed in an attack in northern Cameroon, a local resident and security sources told AFP yesterday.

The attacks came as Nigeria's military again maintained the extremists had been defeated, and that its repeated raids and suicide bombings were "a sign of weakness".

At least 20,000 people have been

killed in nearly nine years of violence and more than 2.6mn made homeless, triggering a humanitarian crisis across the Lake Chad region.

Bulama Bukar said Boko Haram fighters stormed his village, Alau-Kofa, about 8pm on Sunday, firing guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

"Two people were burnt alive and the whole village was burnt, along with our food," he told AFP.

Bukar, whose father was shot in the leg during the attack, said the militants "specifically came to steal our cattle" but were forced to abandon the herds when soldiers arrived.

"Last Wednesday they attacked the village, killed three people and took away 50 cattle. And now they came back," he added.

A security source 12km away in the Borno state capital Maiduguri, confirmed Bukar's account.

"It is part of the fightback strategy by the terrorists, who are facing mounting pressure from the military," he said.

Another security source in Cameroon said "six people were killed and the attackers burnt down more than 100 houses" in the village of Hitawa, at about 11pm on Sunday.

Nigeria's military said last week they had cleared the Sambisa Forest in Borno state of Boko Haram fighters — just over a year after making a similar claim.

Major General Rogers Ibe Nicholas, leading operations against the militants, was reported as saying yesterday that the Islamic State affiliate was "completely defeated".

Asked about the claim, he told AFP: "In the Sambisa Forest where we have them, we have completely defeated them."


The military was "taking them on wherever they go outside that area, he

added. He attributed Sunday's attack in Alau-Kofa to "criminals who came to steal goats".

At a meeting with the military and security agencies in Maiduguri, Nigeria's Information Minister Lai Mohamed said: "The last phase of the war with Boko Haram is now on."

"The military is punching deep into the enclaves of the insurgents," he said, adding that the group was only able to mount "cowardly attacks on soft targets".

"That, in itself, is a sign of weakness," he added.

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	Ministry of Interior Purchase Department	175/2018	Maintenance Contract for Green Areas & Internal Plants at Abu Samra for Three years.	QAR 500	QAR 40,000	One Envelope	05/03/2018
	Qatar General Electricity & Water Corporation - Kahramaa	LTC/1309/2017	Three Years Service Price Agreement for Lease of Photocopy Machines Purchase of Tender Documents through KM website <a href="http://www.km.qa">www.km.qa</a> IT Department	QAR 3,000	QAR 300,000	Two Envelopes	18/02/2018
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National Transportation Safety Board chairman Robert Sumwalt presents the ongoing investigation to the media at the SC Emergency Management Division in Cayce, South Carolina on Sunday.

**INVESTIGATION**  
**Locked switch blamed for fatal Amtrak crash**

A locked switch is being blamed for the collision between an Amtrak passenger train and a freight train that killed two people and injured more than 100 others in South Carolina early on Sunday. The head of the National Transportation Safety Board said a switch on the tracks, which the freight hauler CSX Corp owns and operates, was padlocked in a position that steered the Amtrak train onto a siding near Columbia, where it crashed into a parked, unoccupied CXS train. "Key to this investigation is learning why the switch was lined that way," Robert Sumwalt, the chairman of the NTSB, told reporters at a news conference on Sunday. NTSB officials were not immediately available to elaborate.

**UNDER FIRE**  
**Ad using Martin Luther King speech draws backlash**

A TV commercial shown during the Super Bowl that used the voice of the late Martin Luther King Jr to advertise pickup trucks drew criticism from viewers. The ad for Dodge Ram trucks uses audio from the last major speech King gave before his assassination in 1968. "He who is greatest among you shall be your servant," King's resonant voice is heard saying over images of firefighters, teachers and working men and women with their trucks helping people. "I want to punch that Dodge commercial in the face," wrote one Twitter user with the handle 'sreeker'. Lawyer Cat posted on Twitter: "I'm no civil rights scholar, but I'm pretty sure MLK never had a dream to be featured in a Dodge Ram commercial."

**POLITICS**  
**Mulroney daughter seeks to lead Ontario conservatives**

Caroline Mulroney, daughter of Canada's former conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney, has announced she will run for leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario ahead of the upcoming provincial election. Mulroney's entry into politics could spell the emergence of a new political dynasty in the country — with current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau himself the son of former prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. "Let's get it done. I'm running for leader. Join me," she posted on Twitter Sunday night, with a link to her campaign website. Speaking to The Star, Mulroney shared her belief that people "really want something completely new" following 15 years of liberal government in Ontario.

**RETIREMENT**  
**Paul Simon announces his farewell tour**

Legendary singer-songwriter Paul Simon yesterday announced his farewell tour, saying that the prospect of retirement was "a little unsettling, a touch exhilarating, and something of a relief." In a post on Twitter, Simon — whose career began seven decades ago as half of the duo Simon and Garfunkel — said that this year's Homeward Bound tour in the United States and Europe was a "natural end" to his performing career. Simon said his reasons for retiring included the death in December of his band's "lead guitarist and my friend of 30 years," Vincent N'guini, and the fact that time spent away from his wife and family "detracts from the joy of playing."

# Two US senators unveil bipartisan immigration plan

Reuters  
Washington

Two US senators yesterday unveiled a bipartisan compromise on immigration that would protect young "Dreamer" immigrants who were brought to the United States illegally as children and would also boost security on the Mexican border. But President Donald Trump appeared to dismiss the plan immediately, saying any deal should provide funding for his long-promised Mexican border wall, and blaming Democrats for the impasse over immigration. The proposal by John McCain, a Republican, and Chris Coons, a Democrat, is narrower in scope than a plan Trump put forward last month, which was resisted by both headline Republicans and Democrats. It does not offer a sweeping overhaul of the immigration system and does not include funding for the wall, but calls for a way for Dreamers to avoid deportation and earn citizenship, while also bolstering border security. The legislation would rely on a variety of tools, not just a physical wall, for securing the southern US border.

"The bill...does address the two most pressing problems we face: protecting DACA recipients and securing the border," Coons said in a joint statement with McCain. The Dreamers were previously protected from deportation under Democratic former President Barack Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. DACA had been set to expire on March 5 after Trump cancelled the programme last fall and asked Congress to come up with a legislative solution by this date. But a federal court last month blocked the Trump administration from ending the program, and the administration's appeal is now pending before the Supreme Court. The McCain-Coons plan, which mirrors similar bipartisan legislation introduced in the House of Representatives last month, was to be formally introduced later yesterday. The proposal comes as the Republican-controlled Congress seeks to avert a federal government shutdown when current funding expires on Thursday. US lawmakers have so far failed to pass a long-term budget deal, instead relying on a series of short-term fixes that have been increasingly entangled with wrangling over

immigration. Failure to agree on an immigration fix led to a three-day shutdown of government agencies last month. Trump has said that any immigration deal must include billions of dollars to build the border wall. At the same time he has given mixed messages about the future of the hundreds of thousands of DACA participants. "Any deal on DACA that does not include STRONG border security and the desperately needed WALL is a total waste of time. March 5th is rapidly approaching and the Dems seem not to care about DACA. Make a deal!" the president said in a tweet yesterday. While the McCain-Coons plan does not include funding for the border wall, Coons said yesterday he thought there was still enough support among both Democrats and Republicans to pass it, noting that the House bill has attracted 27 Republican and another 27 Democratic lawmakers co-sponsoring it. Trump could veto legislation that he deemed unacceptable if it were passed by both chambers of Congress. That would likely ignite a congressional battle over whether to overturn his veto.



Victims Rachael Denhollander (right) hugs Larissa Boyce at the conclusion of the sentencing of former Michigan State University and USA Gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar in Eaton County Circuit Court in Charlotte, Michigan.

## Ex-USA Gymnastics doctor gets more years behind bars

Reuters  
Charlotte, Michigan

Former USA Gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar was yesterday sentenced to an additional 40 to 125 years in prison for molesting young female gymnasts, capping weeks of horrifying testimony from hundreds of victims who told of his decades of abuse. Nassar, who previously received a 40-to-175-year sentence in Ingham County, Michigan, for sexual assault, was sentenced yesterday in neighbouring Eaton County on a second set of abuse charges. He is also serving a 60-year federal term for child pornography convictions. The doctor offered a brief apology to his victims yesterday, saying, "The visions of your testimonies will forever be present in my thoughts." But Judge Janice Cunningham said Nassar had again suggested in a pre-sentencing interview with authorities that his conduct was legitimate medical treatment, even after he was sentenced in Ingham County. "I am not convinced that you

truly understand that what you did was wrong, and the devastating impact that you have had on the victims, their families and friends," she told Nassar. "Clearly you are in denial. You don't get it." As Cunningham delivered Nassar's sentence, Rachael Denhollander, the first woman to make her allegations of abuse public in 2016, smiled broadly and squeezed her husband's hand. After Nassar was led out in handcuffs, a parade of victims lined up to hug and thank Denhollander. "I'm just ready for it to be over," Bailey Lorencen, who was abused by Nassar as a preteen gymnast, told Reuters. "It's finally done." As with last month's proceedings in Ingham County, yesterday's sentencing followed days of testimony from Nassar's victims who offered wrenching accounts of his abuse masquerading as treatment, sometimes with their own parents present in the exam room. Friday's hearing was briefly interrupted when Randall Margraves, whose three daughters were all Nassar victims, charged at Nassar in the courtroom and

tried to attack him before being tackled by officers. All told, the two sentencing hearings saw more than 200 victim impact statements, and prosecutors have said there are approximately 265 known victims in total. Many women chose to speak out after watching fellow survivors deliver their statements in court. Cunningham briefly took note of the institutional failures that permitted Nassar to continue molesting girls even after several victims told coaches, trainers, Michigan State and a local police department about his abuse. "It is unfathomable how many victims would have been spared had authorities acted upon the complaints received years ago," she said. Many of the victims have filed lawsuits against USA Gymnastics and Michigan State, accusing them of ignoring complaints against Nassar. Denhollander harshly criticised the university, which has asked a judge to dismiss the litigation. "They have put institutional protectionism ahead and above the souls of little children," she said.

## SpaceX to launch 'world's most powerful rocket'

AFP  
Miami

SpaceX is poised for the first test launch today of its Falcon Heavy, which aims to become the world's most powerful rocket, capable of ferrying people to the Moon or Mars some day. No people are on board, just a mannequin wearing a futuristic spacesuit, strapped into CEO Elon Musk's very own cherry red Tesla car. "Starman in a Red Roadster," Musk posted yesterday on Instagram, showing the rocket's payload on a pedestal, aiming skyward. The blast-off is scheduled for 1.30pm from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

The destination is deep space, into an orbit about the same distance from the Sun as Mars — but not all that close to the Red Planet itself. Musk has cautioned that the maiden launch of the Falcon Heavy may indeed fail. "Will be in deep space for a billion years or so if it doesn't blow up on ascent," Musk had earlier said on Twitter in December. But the test launch could be a game-changer for SpaceX — already a top cargo supplier to the International Space Station under a \$1.6bn contract with Nasa — as it seeks to gain a bigger piece of the commercial space market. The launch is also a milestone in US-based efforts to send astronauts to space, a ca-

capacity lost when the US space shuttle program was retired in 2011. Since then, the world's astronauts have relied on Russian Soyuz rockets for transport to the International Space Station. "Falcon Heavy was designed from the outset to carry humans into space and restores the possibility of flying missions with crew to the Moon or Mars," SpaceX said in a statement. "When Falcon Heavy lifts off, it will be the most powerful operational rocket in the world by a factor of two," it added. "Falcon Heavy can lift more than twice the payload of the next closest operational vehicle, the Delta IV Heavy, at one-third the cost."

The Delta IV Heavy costs about \$350mn per launch, according to United Launch Alliance. The Falcon Heavy is essentially three Falcon 9 rockets in one, with a total of 27 Merlin engines. These engines "together generate more than 5mn pounds of thrust at liftoff, equal to approximately eighteen 747 aircraft," said SpaceX. The rocket is designed to carry nearly 64 metric tonnes into orbit, more than the mass of a fully loaded 737 jetliner. Previous rockets that are no longer in commission have been more powerful than the Falcon Heavy — including the Saturn V moon rocket, last flown in 1973, which delivered more payload to orbit.

# Tiny Michigan town in water fight with Nestle

By Luc Olinga, AFP  
Osceola Township, United States

Global food conglomerate Nestle is in a battle with critics in tiny Osceola Township, Michigan where residents complain the Swiss company's water extraction techniques are ruining the environment. Maryann Borden, a retired teacher who has lived in the western Michigan town since 1953, has photos documenting changes in the Twin Creek river since Nestle began pumping water in the region in the early 2000s for its 'Ice Mountain' brand of bottled water. "It's not the same creek," Borden, 73, told AFP. "It's narrower and deeper and therefore warmer," compared with the "biting cold" water of her youth. "The trout can't survive in it because the water is warmer," she added. Located about four hours north of Detroit and with a population of just 900, Osceola Township is a sleepy rural community whose biggest employer is SpringHill Camp, a Christian-oriented program for kids. The town opposes granting Nestle a permit to build a pumping booster sta-



David Huff, chairperson of the zoning and planning commission for Osceola Township, stands before Chippewa Creek in Osceola Township.

tion along a water pipeline that feeds a tanker load dock in Evert, another small town nearby. The booster station would help the company pump more water from a controversial Osceola County wellhead if the Michigan Department of Environ-

mental Quality approves the project. Nestle wants to pump 400 gallons of water a minute, up from the 250 a minute currently. Town officials voted in January to appeal a county court's ruling in Nestle's favour, portending a judicial saga.

"If you look at the culverts, they provide an historic landmark," said Tim Ladd, manager of Osceola Township. "You don't have to be a geologist or a hydrologist to see those water levels," he added. "The water lake tables are lower today than what they were two years ago." Nestle rejects this argument and also has some backing among supporters who praise the company for keeping water rates low. "There's been no measurable changes to the streams, the aquatic life there," said Arlene Anderson-Vincent, natural resource manager at Nestle Waters North America, who notes that dams in the area "can affect those streams." Nestle points to company-sponsored research that backs up its stance, but there has been no independent scientific review of the matter. Much of the anger in Osceola Township, that voted heavily for President Donald Trump in the 2016 US election, is due to a sense the town is being exploited by a powerful multinational blinded by profit. Nestle pays just \$200 a year to the state of Michigan to pump more than 130mn gallons (590mn liters) of water. Other US states have struck similar

arrangements with big companies, authorising them to pump as much water as they wish for a pittance as long as they build the infrastructure themselves. This includes the beverage giants Coca-Cola and PepsiCo, which sell water under the Dasani and Aquafina brands. "Nestle has a reputation worldwide of going to poor rural communities, offering all kinds of economic benefits to the community that never really materialise, and taking as much water as they can get and when the stream runs dry they leave," said Peggy Case, president of the Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation. Nestle said it spends \$18mn a year in Michigan, including \$2.4mn in taxes in 2016. The company employs 280 people at its factory in Mecosta County, about 40 minutes away from Osceola Township where about 50 Nestle workers live. Nestle is turning to Twin Creek River as demand for bottled water rises. Wholesale bottled water sales hit a total of \$16.4bn in 2016, surpassing soda sales of \$12.5bn for the first time, according to the Beverage Marketing consultancy.

Nestle's water brands in the US, which includes Poland Springs and Pure Life in addition to Ice Mountain, garnered 55.3% of the company's total worldwide water sales in 2016. Zackary Szakacs, city manager of Evert, credited Nestle with keeping water rates low in the region. The average income in Osceola Township is just \$20,000 per year, around the poverty level for a family of three. "Thank God we have two of those wells in the city of Evert because I would have to lay people off," Szakacs said. "They help maintain and keep our water rates low so our residents that are poor that live in this community can afford to pay their monthly water bill." After finding the chemical perchlorate at some wells in 2015, Nestle financed the cleanup. Evert is only a couple of hours drive from Flint, where a major water contamination scandal has drawn national attention. Access to affordable drinking water is becoming more problematic, and as many as 36% of US households may be unable to afford water within five years, according to a 2017 study by Michigan State University scholar Elizabeth Mack.



# Daughter’s fears grow over bookseller missing in China

AFP  
Hong Kong

The daughter of missing Swedish publisher Gui Minhai who was snatched in China last month says she fears she may never see him again and has urged the international community to take action.

Gui was arrested on a train to Beijing just over two weeks ago while accompanied by two Swedish diplomats – the second time he has disappeared in murky circumstances into Chinese custody.

His daughter Angela Gui, 23, told AFP she had heard nothing from him since and had received no information about where he

might be. “There are all sorts of awful scenarios that could be unfolding,” she said, speaking from England, where she is a student. The United States and European Union have called for Gui’s immediate release and his disappearance has sparked a diplomatic row between Stockholm and Beijing.

But Chinese authorities have so far publicly parried requests for information, suggesting only that Swedish diplomats had somehow violated Chinese law. Civil society has come under increasing pressure since President Xi Jinping took office in 2012, with authorities rounding up hundreds of lawyers and activists.

“I just hope that Sweden and

other governments will be as vocal as possible,” Angela said. “I want them to demonstrate actual consequences, instead of just repeating how unacceptable it is.” It is the second time 53-year-old Gui, who was born in China but went on to become a Swedish citizen, has been snatched. He first disappeared in 2015, one of five Hong Kong-based booksellers known for publishing gossip titles about Chinese political leaders who went missing and resurfaced in the mainland.

Gui vanished while on holiday in Thailand and eventually surfaced at an undisclosed location in China, confessing to involvement in a fatal traffic accident and smuggling illegal books. Chinese authorities declared

they had released him in October but his daughter said he was under “loose house arrest” in the eastern mainland city of Ningbo, where some of his relatives still live.

Angela told AFP she had spoken to her father on Skype multiple times a week in the past three months and that he was able to move around the city, but was followed by police. He had been allowed to go to the Swedish consulate in Shanghai three times to apply for documentation, including a new passport, and Angela said she did not believe he had been told explicitly to stay in Ningbo.

Angela graduated from England’s Warwick University with a master’s degree the day before

her father disappeared again and had spoken to him ahead of the ceremony. “He said: ‘I’m very sorry that I can’t be there! I told him it was alright because I’m doing my doctorate now, so there was another one for him to come to,’” she said.

“I was hoping that there would be an end to this soon and that he might be able to come home.” On January 20, Gui was grabbed by plainclothes police while on a train between Ningbo and Beijing, where he was due to have a medical appointment. Chinese officials have given no public reason for his detention. Angela fears he may now be put on trial and receive a longer sentence, jeopardising his health. Doctors in Ningbo said her

father may have the neurological disease ALS – he had been on his way to Beijing to see a Swedish specialist. The muscles in his hands had begun to atrophy and he had lost some sensation in the soles of his feet, Angela said. “If he does have ALS, perhaps he might not have that much time left,” she told AFP.

China was widely criticised after veteran rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Liu Xiaobo died from liver cancer while on medical parole in July last year. Rights groups had pushed for him to be allowed to seek medical treatment abroad. It was the first time a Nobel laureate had died in custody since Nazi Germany. Angela said the international community must

snap out of its “paralysis” over the case, describing her frustration that more had not been done to get her father out of China sooner. “He shouldn’t have been abducted again in the first place – there should have been a way of getting him home before that,” she said. “Or there should have been a way of making sure he was safe when he was travelling.”

A spokesman for the Swedish government told AFP that “intense efforts” were underway, but would not say if they had received any information as to Gui’s whereabouts. A Western diplomat in Beijing said he feared Gui would not be released “any time soon”. “The circumstances of his abduction are unprecedented,” he told AFP.

# Hopes brighten for high-level Korean talks

Reuters  
Seoul

North Korea’s ceremonial leader will make an unprecedented visit to South Korea this week, officials said yesterday, as hopes grow for high-level inter-Korean talks during the Winter Olympics that begin in four days.

North Korea’s official KCNA news agency confirmed that Kim Yong-nam, president of the Presidium of the Supreme People’s Assembly, would attend the Olympics’ opening ceremony on Friday in South Korea’s alpine resort town of Pyeongchang.

Seoul’s Unification Ministry said Kim would lead a 22-strong delegation that was expected to arrive in South Korea on Friday for a three-day trip. Kim’s visit comes as Seoul pins its hopes on high-level talks during the Feb 9-25 Games between not only the two Koreas but also the North and the United States.

The South’s presidential Blue House in Seoul said the visit by Kim, the most senior North Korean official to cross the border into the South since the Korean War ended with a truce in 1953, would create “various opportunities” for high-level talks.

“(Kim’s visit) shows North Korea’s resolve for improved



Kim Yong-nam

inter-Korean relations and the success of the Olympics, as well as its sincere, earnest attitude,” Blue House spokesman Kim Eui-kyeom told a news briefing. The Games opening ceremony will also be attended by US Vice President Mike Pence, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and other world leaders.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in told his US counterpart Donald Trump in a phone call that the momentum of improved North-South relations would

continue and that Pence’s visit would be an “important prelude for that”, according to the Blue House.

Trump said during a meeting with North Korean defectors that, despite a “very tricky situation”, North Korea’s participation in the Olympics could result in “something good”.

However, a White House official has said Pence planned to use his attendance to counter what he sees as Pyongyang’s efforts to “hijack” the Olympics with a

propaganda campaign. A North Korean art troupe would also likely travel by ship to perform during the Olympics under an exemption from bilateral sanctions, the South’s Unification Ministry said yesterday.

With performances set for later this week, the North proposed that the art troupe use a ferry for transportation and lodging, according to the Unification Ministry.

South Korea banned all North Korean ships from entering its ports in May 2010 and cut off most inter-Korean exchanges, including tourism, trade and aid, in response to a torpedo attack by the North on a navy ship that killed 46 sailors.

The Unification Ministry said no final decision had been made but it was in consultation with Washington and others to tem-

porarily lift the ban to facilitate the North’s proposal. “We’re seeking to apply an exemption for the May (2010) measures to support a successful hosting of the Olympics,” ministry spokesman Baik Tae-hyun told a news briefing.

The North used the ship, the Mangyongbong 92, for similar purposes during the 2002 Asian Games in the South Korean port city of Busan. The ship now chiefly operates between North Korea and Russia.

The North had initially asked that the art troupe be allowed to cross the border by foot via Panmunjom, located in the demilitarised zone where a North Korean soldier staged a daring defection to the South in November.

The orchestra is scheduled to perform at Gangneung, near Pyeongchang, on Thursday and

in the capital, Seoul, on Sunday.

A lawmaker in Seoul said some 36,000 foreigners had been banned from entering South Korea, including people connected with extremist groups such as Islamic State, to ensure security during the Games.

Lawmaker Yi Wan-young told reporters of the ban after being briefed by the nation’s spy agency yesterday. Yi said around 60,000 security personnel would guard Olympics venues.

Kim is North Korea’s nominal head of state, while the reclusive country is ruled by Kim Jong-un, the third-generation hereditary leader.

Kim Yong-nam also attended the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing and the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. He is not blacklisted by the United Nations or the United States because he is

not involved in the North’s illicit nuclear and missile programmes or associated with related research institutes.

In 2014, Pyongyang sent Choe Ryong-hae, a close aide to Kim Jong-un, as part of a high-level delegation to attend the closing ceremony of the Asian Games in Incheon, South Korea.

Choe is subject to unilateral sanctions imposed by South Korea in 2016. “Kim Yong-nam has little influence in North Korean internal politics, inter-Korean affairs or the nuclear issues, but has mainly been taking charge of summit diplomacy,” said Cheong Seong-chang, a senior fellow at South Korea’s Sejong Institute think tank.

“This time, if he gets to meet Moon, he could convey Kim Jong-un’s message or invitation to Pyongyang,” Cheong said.



A car passes through a ‘musical tunnel’ on an expressway between the Inje Speedium resort complex where a delegation of North Korean cheerleaders attending the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympic Games are due to stay, and Gangneung.

## New Zealand PM in historic address

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern yesterday promised changes that she hopes will reduce inequality for the country’s indigenous Maori in a historic speech marking Waitangi Day. The 37-year-old became the first female PM to be granted the right to speak during the traditional Maori welcoming ceremony held at a Maori meeting house in Waitangi. The small settlement on the tip of the North Island is where the country’s founding document, a treaty between Maori chiefs and the British Crown, was signed on February 6, 1840. “I do not take lightly the privilege extended to me to speak from the veranda today, not only as prime minister but as a wahine (woman),” she said. The Labour leader spoke about the inequalities that still existed between Maori and the rest of the population. There was unemployment and poverty that existed among whanau (family) and rangatahi (youth), Ardern said. She also raised access to mental health services and the rate of Maori incarceration as important issues.

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

**I, TONI ROSE PAMPILO CASTANEDA**  
**holder of**  
**Philippines Passport No. EB2998322**  
**QID No. 28960801832**  
**hereby change my name**  
**from**  
**TONI ROSE PAMPILO CASTANEDA**  
**to**  
**TONI ROSE CASTANEDA DIONISIO**

**Any objection, please contact**  
**THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR**  
**NATIONALITY AFFAIRS**  
**within 15 days from the publication of this notice.**

# One crew dead, another missing in Japan army helicopter crash

AFP  
Tokyo

One crew member was confirmed dead and another was missing yesterday after a Japanese military helicopter crashed in a residential area in the southwest of the country, reportedly injuring a local girl and setting a home on fire.

A 26-year-old co-pilot was found unconscious following the crash in the town of Kanzaki and later confirmed dead, a defence ministry spokesman said.

“We are still searching for the 43-year-old pilot,” the spokesman told AFP, retracting earlier remarks made by Defence Minister Itsunori Onodera, who said both crew members on board were retrieved “in a state of cardiac and respiratory arrest.” That language is often used by Japanese officials before deaths are officially confirmed.

Quoting local fire department officials, the *Asahi Shimbun* daily said an 11-year-old girl who was in the house when the helicop-

ter crashed was sent to hospital after injuring her knee. Immediate confirmation of the report was not available. Japan’s NHK television showed a thick plume of grey smoke rising from the site of the crash in between the rooftops of local houses, some 300m (1,000ft) away from an elementary school. Local firefighters could be seen running through the streets with red fire hoses as people were evacuated from the area. “I heard something like a rumbling of the earth,” a woman living near the crash site told NHK. “I rushed out there and saw a blaze and black smoke. It’s impossible that this happens in such a place.”

Onodera earlier told reporters the AH-64 Apache attack helicopter had gone down in Japan’s Saga region and “burst into flames”.

Local officials confirmed the crash site was a residential area, adding one home had caught fire. The local fire authority said it had sent 14 fire engines and three ambulances to the site. The incident revived memories of a 2016 crash in which a Japanese air force

jet with six people aboard went missing in mountainous terrain. Four bodies were later recovered.

There has also been a string of accidents involving US military helicopters that have fuelled opposition to their presence in the country.

The latest was a UH-1 helicopter that was forced into an emergency landing last month on the southern Japanese island of Okinawa.

No one was hurt in that incident, which officials blamed on a faulty rotor blade. Japan’s Self-Defence Forces (SDF) have been banned from waging any kind of combat beyond defence of the nation since the US-imposed constitution of 1947 that followed the carnage of World War II. They have been deployed overseas in peacekeeping missions, some of which have proved controversial at home.

And while the SDF is strictly limited in terms of the scope of its military activity, Japan nonetheless boasts an impressive array of weaponry with highly trained personnel.



Smoke billows from a house as Japanese firefighters extinguish the fire after a Japan’s Ground Self-Defence Force’s (JSDF) AH-64 Apache attack helicopter crashed in a residential area in Kanzaki, Saga prefecture, yesterday.

HEALTHCARE  
**Women called back in after review of cancer screening**

Thousands of cervical smear test samples are being reviewed by an independent screening service after a problem was discovered in a laboratory. Basildon and Thurrock NHS foundation trust in Essex said 2,500 samples from cervical cancer tests were being re-screened after a problem with testing was identified in a routine Public Health England quality assurance visit in June 2017. So far, 900 smear test samples have been reviewed, and 17 women have been invited for further assessment. Pathology First, which runs the laboratory where the problem was discovered, delivers laboratory services to 750,000 patients and more than 100 GP practices in the south-east.

LAW AND ORDER  
**Worboys back in Wakefield prison**

The black-cab rapist John Worboys has been moved to a prison outside London as victims fight to keep him in jail for a longer sentence. Worboys served his sentence in HMP Wakefield, West Yorkshire, following his conviction in 2009. But he was moved to the high-security Belmarsh prison in London after the parole board announced it had approved his release. Victims of Worboys, who drugged, sexually assaulted and raped women in the back of his black cab, were angered by his move to a prison in the capital, where he carried out his crimes. The 60-year-old has been moved back to Wakefield after the outcry, the Press Association reported.

DECISION  
**Charge paid by migrants for using NHS to double**

Charges paid by temporary migrants to the UK to use the NHS are to double, the government has announced. Ministers said the move would raise around £220mn a year for the health service while ensuring that migrants made a "fair contribution" towards its costs. The increase to the immigration health surcharge – payable by people from outside the European Economic Area staying in the UK for six months or longer – means the main rate will rise from £200 to £400 a year. The discounted rate for students and tourism. Those on the youth mobility scheme will go up from £150 to £300. A surcharge was brought in by the government in 2015 in a clampdown on so-called "health tourism".

CRIME  
**Man stabbed 'after fighting off moped thieves'**

A man has been stabbed on Oxford Street in central London after he fought back against moped robbers, according to an eyewitness. Emergency services were called to an incident near Oxford Circus tube station after reports of a stabbing. An eyewitness told the Guardian that she heard loud screams while walking nearby, and saw an altercation between about five people, including a person in a motorbike helmet and passer-by who had his mobile phone stolen. The man who had his phone stolen jumped on the back of the moped, which was circling nearby, and appeared to have been stabbed just before the robbers drove away, the eyewitness said.

PLEDGE  
**Welfare payments will be seamless, vows minister**

The roll-out of the government's flagship welfare policy Universal Credit will now happen "seamlessly" after months of difficulties, a minister claimed. Kit Malthouse, appointed in last month's reshuffle to the department for work and pensions, said changes to the system would make a "massive difference" and address "the bulk of issues". It follows the chequered introduction of the new benefit, which replaces six others, with delays and administrative glitches that left some recipients facing hardship and destitution. Huge pressure forced ministers to make changes including shortening the six-week wait for the first payment and making it easier to get advance loans.

# Hatton Garden raid ringleader dies in prison

Guardian News and Media  
London

Terry Perkins, one of the ringleaders of the £14mn Hatton Garden raid, has died in his cell in Belmarsh prison, a week after he was ordered to pay £6.5mn in compensation or face a further jail term.

Perkins, 69, a career criminal who had diabetes and heart problems, is understood to have died from natural causes. He was serving a seven-year sentence for the robbery of a safe deposit facility in central London in 2015, during which £14mn in jewels, cash and gold was stolen. Arrested a few weeks after the burglary with the other three ringleaders, he pleaded guilty at the first opportunity.

**It emerged during the case that Perkins had to inject himself with insulin during the burglary because of his diabetes**

Last week at Woolwich crown court, Perkins was told that he, along with the four others, would have to pay a total of £27.5mn or face a further seven-year sentence. The judge, Christopher Kinch QC, said: "A number of these defendants are not only of a certain age but have in some cases serious health problems.

"As a matter of principle and policy it is very difficult to endorse any approach that there is a particular treatment for someone who chooses to go out and commit offences at the advanced stage of their lives that some of these defendants were."

It emerged during the case that Perkins had to inject himself with insulin during the burglary because of his diabetes. The burglars became known as the "diamond wheezers" because of

their poor physical health.

At 35, Perkins had taken part in a raid on the Security Express depot in Shoreditch, east London, in 1983. £6mn was stolen, the biggest-ever cash robbery at the time.

On the same day, 32 years later, he was part of a team of elderly burglars who broke into the safe deposit centre in Hatton Garden Safe Deposit and initially seemed to have got away with millions of pounds worth of jewels, cash and gold.

Perkins was also facing a fresh charge for a burglary of the jewellers Chatila in Bond Street in 2010. He was scheduled to appear in Southwark crown court for trial last December but was too ill to do so. His co-defendant, Danny Jones, who was also jailed for seven years for the Hatton Garden raid, had already pleaded guilty to the Chatila burglary. He is awaiting sentencing.

Another member of the Hatton Garden team, Brian Reader, is also seriously ill in prison. Yesterday, a family member said: "He can't see properly, he can't hear, he is very weak and is down to eight stone."

Reader, who pulled out of the burglary halfway after the gang had been unable to drill through to the vaults and thus did not receive any of the proceeds, will be appealing against the additional sentence.

Barristers for all of the men ordered to pay or face further jail time have said their clients' assets do not amount to a fraction of the millions they are being ordered to pay back. John "Kenny" Collins, 77, is the fourth ringleader ordered to pay.

A prison service spokesperson confirmed the death of Perkins, and said: "As with all deaths in custody, there will be an independent investigation by the prisons and probation ombudsman."



Lauri Love, who is accused of hacking into US government websites, poses with his girlfriend Sylvia Mann outside the Royal Courts of Justice in central London yesterday.

# Alleged hacker wins US extradition appeal

AFP  
London

British judges yesterday agreed to block the extradition to the US of a man accused of hacking into thousands of American government computers in a ruling that could set a precedent for similar pending cases.

Lauri Love, 33, has for several years been battling extradition to face multiple charges for allegedly hacking into the networks of the US Federal Reserve, US Army and Nasa, among others, in 2012 and 2013.

"I am greatly relieved that I am no longer facing the prospect of being locked up for potentially the rest of my life in a country I have never visited," he said following the ruling. "But I am also thankful for the precedent that's been set hopefully by this case."

Kaim Todner, the law firm representing Love, hailed the ruling as a "landmark judgement". "The British justice system has taken the stance that we should deal with the matter ourselves, rather than accept the US government's demands," it said. "It has also been recognised that mental health provisions in US

prisons are not adequate to satisfy us that Lauri would not have come to serious harm if he were extradited," the firm said in a statement.

Love, who has dual British and Finnish citizenship, suffers from Asperger's syndrome and has also been diagnosed with depression.

After his arrest at his home in Britain in October 2013, his lawyers argued he would be prone to physical and mental danger in American prisons, and should instead face charges in Britain.

They appealed against a 2016 court ruling in favour of extradition,

subsequently signed off by Interior Minister Amber Rudd.

Two high court judges now hearing the latest appeal agreed with their argument, with the decision greeted by raucous cheers from Love's supporters who packed the court.

"Oppression as a bar to extradition requires a high threshold, not readily surmounted," wrote Judge Ian Burnett in a joint ruling released yesterday. "But we are satisfied, in the particular combination of circumstances here, that it would be oppressive to extradite Love."

However, the decision lays the groundwork for British prosecution,

tors to take on the case, with the judges noting "it would not be oppressive to prosecute Love in England for the offences alleged against him". The defendant and his supporters welcomed the ruling.

"I'm not saying that I'm looking forward to being prosecuted but I think that there is a better chance that it will be done justly and fairly here in the UK," Love said. "We're not fighting for impunity. We're fighting for what any other defendant would expect in the UK if they're accused of wrongdoing: that they will be treated under the law of our country."

# Actor wins payout in phone-hacking case

Reuters  
London

British actor Hugh Grant has settled a legal case against Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN) after the company admitted that reporters at its three tabloid titles had hacked into his voice mails over a 10-year period to get scoops, he said yesterday.

Grant, who is known internationally for roles in films such as Four Weddings and a Funeral and Notting Hill, won substantial damages from MGN and will donate them to Hacked Off, a group that campaigns against press intrusion.

Grant was one of the highest profile victims of phone-hacking by reporters, a practice that became widespread at some of Britain's fiercely competitive tabloids but was exposed during a major scandal in 2011.

Most of the focus at the time was on the News of the World, a Sunday tabloid owned by Rupert Murdoch which the media mogul shut down at the height of the scandal.

Later, it emerged that phone-hacking had also occurred at the Sun, another Murdoch title, and at the Daily Mirror, Sunday Mirror and Sunday People, all owned by MGN which is part of Trinity Mirror.

"This newspaper group has misled the public and its shareholders for many years; and it has let down its readers and its hard-working journalists," Grant said in a statement after his lawyers announced in court that the case had been settled.

"Those journalists have paid the price for the wrongdoing of executives who have left with large pay-offs and share options," he said, naming several former editors of the three Trinity Mirror titles.

During a short hearing to inform the London High Court that the case had been settled, a lawyer for MGN said the company acknowledged phone-hacking was morally wrong and deeply regretted the acts of its former employees.

"MGN accepts that the unlawful interception of voicemail messages and procurement of

private information about the Claimant and others should never have happened," the lawyer said.

A Trinity Mirror spokesman said the company had no further comment beyond what was said in court.

Grant's complaint related not just to phone-hacking but also to surveillance and blagging, a method whereby reporters would pose as other people to coax private information out of sources who did not realise they were speaking to the press.

Grant's lawyer told the court that one of his main reasons for pursuing the legal claim against MGN was to expose the truth about what she called "Trinity Mirror's concealment of its wrongdoing". As part of the settlement, MGN admitted that "senior employees, including executives, editors and journalists, condoned, encouraged or actively turned a blind eye to the widespread culture of unlawful information gathering activities at all three of its newspapers for many years".



Hugh Grant: legal victory.

# Rat pieces found in vegetables packet

Guardian News and Media  
London

Aldi has removed thousands of packs of frozen mixed vegetables from its shelves after a customer said she found half a rat inside a bag. Pat Bateman, 60, said she had just finished feeding lunch to her two-year-old granddaughter and was putting the packet back in the freezer when she spotted the rodent.

She told the Sun: "It was nearly empty so that's why I spotted something that looked out of place in the bottom of the bag. I couldn't believe my eyes when I pulled it out. It just looked like half a rat. It had fur on it. I showed my husband and because it was frozen we left it to defrost before taking another look at it."

Bateman, a retired florist from Liskeard, Cornwall, said she took the bag back to her local branch of the German supermarket chain and was offered £30 off her next shop. Unsatisfied with the response, she contacted Aldi's head office, sending them photographs

of the offending packet.

Bateman said the offer of compensation had since been increased to £550 but she felt that still fell short of what she should be entitled to and had refused to accept it.

"We felt physically sick after finding the rat," she said. "We had eaten almost all of the bag before we saw it, and what's even worse, I fed it to my youngest granddaughter."

The Sun said an internal Aldi document reported there had been three complaints – two from the environmental health and a third from a customer – of "pieces of small rodent being found in one batch of mixed vegetables". It said the removal from sale was enacted last month.

The offending product was said to have been supplied to Aldi by Agrifreez in Saden, Belgium, which sent out nearly 40,000 packets just before Christmas.

According to the Sun, the internal Aldi report said: "An investigation is under way to identify the root cause and implement corrective action to prevent any re-occurrence before production restarts."



# University admits significant sexual misconduct problem

Guardian News and Media  
London

The University of Cambridge has admitted it has “a significant problem” with sexual misconduct after it received 173 complaints in nine months after launching a new anonymous reporting system. The majority of complaints

(119) alleged student-on-student misconduct, while seven complaints were made by staff against colleagues, and two by students against staff. The rest involved neither staff nor students.

The university said it had expected a high number of reports because of the anonymous nature of the system, introduced last May as part of its Breaking the Silence campaign, and

viewed the results as “a metric of success”.

Victims at Cambridge and other universities, which have come under pressure to tackle sexual misconduct on campuses, are much less likely to pursue formal complaints. Last term between October and December, Cambridge said just six allegations were formally reported.

Graham Virgo, professor of

English private law and pro-vice-chancellor for education at Cambridge, said: “The challenge is that one or two complaints a year do not give a university much information with which to formulate a response to the wider problem.

“Through the anonymous reporting tool, we now have a large number of Cambridge voices who have reported the issues

they’ve faced. It supports our belief that we have a significant problem involving sexual misconduct – what we now need to ensure is that those who have been affected receive the support and guidance they need.”

A number of other universities have introduced similar anonymous reporting tools, including Manchester, but Cambridge is the first to publish such a high

number of reports.

A feature of the tool is that both the individual who is reporting the sexual misconduct and the alleged perpetrator remain anonymous. The website provides links to support available as well as information on how to make an official complaint. The university said some of the reports related to historic misconduct.

Campaigners in the 1752 Group,

set up to address staff-student sexual harassment in higher education, said the Cambridge data highlighted the fear surrounding the use of the official reporting processes in universities.

Writing for The Conversation website, Virgo said the figures would be used to judge the nature and scale of sexual misconduct affecting students and staff, and to act on it accordingly.

## Premier rules out customs union after Brexit

Reuters  
London

The government has ruled out staying in any customs union with the European Union after Brexit, Prime Minister Theresa May’s spokesman said yesterday as the government prepared for a crunch week of Brexit talks.

The extent of any British post-Brexit involvement in the EU’s customs union – which binds members into a trade bloc with common external tariffs – has become a major issue of contention inside May’s divided government and Conservative Party. Membership of the, or a, customs union after Brexit, would prevent London from striking trade deals with countries outside the EU in future.

“The key point, as the prime minister has said on many many occasions, is that we need to have our own independent trade policy and be able to strike trade deals with the rest of the world,” May’s spokesman said. “We will be leaving the EU and the customs union and it is not government policy to be members of ‘the’ customs union or ‘a’ customs union.”

He said the official negotiating stance had been set out in a document published in August giving: “two possible options and they are: a highly streamlined customs arrangement, and a new customs partnership with the EU.”

The spokesman said Britain was still looking at both options, and no deadline for a decision on which one to pursue had been set.

With just a year left before Britain’s March 2019 exit from the European Union, May’s party remains deeply divided over what sort of relationship should be built between the world’s biggest trading bloc and the world’s sixth-largest economy.

Such are the divisions within May’s government, that the debate over the extent of Britain’s post-Brexit participation in a EU customs union has taken place in public with key ministers offering a range of views.



The European Commission’s chief negotiator for the UK exiting the European Union, Michel Barnier (right) is welcomed by the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, David Davis, on his arrival for a lunch meeting at No 10 Downing Street in central London, yesterday.

# May slams Trump over NHS comments

Guardian News and Media  
London

Theresa May has rebuked Donald Trump over his claim the NHS is failing, publicly backing her Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, after he tweeted disagreement with the US president’s view.

The response from May – who generally seeks to avoid criticising Trump – came after the president condemned Democrat plans for a universal healthcare system by noting in a tweet Saturday’s protest march in London demanding more NHS funding.

“The Democrats are pushing for universal healthcare while thousands of people are marching in the UK because their U system is going broke and not working,” he said.

Hunt responded via Twitter by saying that while he disagreed with the opinions of some of Saturday’s marchers, “not ONE of them wants to live in a system where 28m people have no cover”, a reference to the US situation. He added: “NHS may have challenges but I’m proud to be from the country that invented universal coverage – where all get care no matter the size of their bank balance”.

Asked whether May backed Hunt’s opinion, her spokesman said: “The prime minister is proud of having an NHS which is free at the point of delivery.

“NHS funding is at a record high, and was prioritised in the budget with an extra £2.8bn. In the recent Commonwealth Fund international survey the

NHS was rated the best in the world for a second time.”

Asked whether No 10 backed Hunt’s specific tweet, the spokesman said: “Hunt is the health secretary and of course he speaks for the government on these matters.”

The spokesman declined to say whether the premier was annoyed at another leader expressing opinions on UK domestic policy. But asked if May had ever commented on the US healthcare system he said: “I can’t recall her having done so.”

**“NHS may have challenges but I’m proud to be from the country that invented universal coverage - where all get care no matter the size of their bank balance”**

The public disagreement runs counter to a general policy within Downing Street of seeking to maintain strong ties with Trump, which involved May visiting him soon after his inauguration last year, and inviting the president for a state visit.

That trip has been delayed, seemingly because of Trump’s worries he could face mass protests. After a planned lower-key visit to open the new US embassy in London was also called off, officials are now planning a working visit for later this year.

Jeremy Corbyn also denounced Trump’s view. The Labour leader wrote: “Wrong. People were marching because we love our NHS and hate what the Tories are doing to it. Healthcare is a human right”.

After his tweet mentioning the NHS, Trump praised the cover-

age of Fox News for “exposing the truth”. The channel’s morning show had featured the former Ukip leader Nigel Farage discussing the pro-NHS marches. Asked why people were protesting, Farage claimed pressure on the NHS was caused by immigration.

“Well the big problem we’ve got is a population crisis caused by government policy on immigration,” Farage said.

“We have a population of 65mn but it’s increasing by half a million people a year. We just haven’t got enough hospitals, we haven’t got enough doctors, we haven’t got enough facilities.”

The People’s Assembly, an anti-austerity campaign group that organised the demonstration, also wrote an open letter to Trump defending the NHS.

“It has been a shining example to the world of what can be achieved when we put the needs of the collective good over the interests of a few wealthy individuals,” the letter read.

“Unfortunately our current government have been persuaded to increasingly adopt policies which represent those of your government,” it said.

“We don’t agree with your divisive and incorrect rhetoric. No thanks,” the letter said.

Republican attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the Obama-era legislation which expanded access to health insurance, failed in Congress last year.

The Republican tax cut which was passed in December included a repeal of the ACA’s individual mandate, a move which led Trump to claim – erroneously – that he had “essentially repealed Obamacare”.

# Snow and ice bring chaos to the roads

The cold snap is likely to continue for most of this week

London Evening Standard  
London

Snow brought chaos to one of the commuter belt’s busiest motorways as a series of pile-ups blocked the M20 yesterday.

Police warned of treacherous conditions for drivers in Sussex and Kent, with heavy snow showers and ice turning roads into “skating rinks”.

The worst incidents were on the M20 in Kent near Maidstone, where there were at least five multiple vehicle crashes, involving as many as 15 cars, although there were no reports of major injuries. Kent Police urged motorists to slow down and said in a tweet: “Watch your speed and sudden road changes. Watch out for static vehicles and drive safely”.

One witness, @cambundock, said on Twitter: “I’ve never see

anything like this. Absolute carnage with vehicles overturned, abandoned and facing the wrong way on the hard shoulder. Expensive day for the insurance companies. All because people don’t adapt their driving to the conditions.”

**“I’ve never see anything like this. Absolute carnage with vehicles overturned, abandoned and facing the wrong way on the hard shoulder”**

Rail passengers were also hit, with delays on some Southern Rail routes due to ice building up on the electrified rail as 3cm of snow settled.

Forecasters issued a yellow warning for snow and ice for London, south-east England and parts of East Anglia.

The cold snap is likely to continue for most of this week, with a new low temperature for this winter expected to be set in the Scottish Highlands tonight.

The coldest night of the year so

far was on January 21 in Kinbrace and Altnaharra in the Highlands, at -13.7C.

London is also expected to suffer a heavy frost, with temperatures falling to -4C. Met Office forecaster Craig Snell said the first full week of February would be “one of our coldest weeks of this winter so far”.

He added: “It’s going to be a cold week, plenty of dry weather around, but many places will probably see some snow at some point during the week, but for a lot of us not really amounting to much at all.” A snow and ice weather warning has been issued for Wales, Northern Ireland, most of Scotland and northern England, until 3pm today.

A spell of rain, sleet and increasingly snow will move east across the UK.

The Local Government Association said 1.5mn tonnes of salt had been stockpiled to cope with the cold snap. “Gritters will be out treating thousands of miles of roads as the big chill bites,” said a spokesman.

## Tough guys



Competitors make their way through muddy water as they take part in the Tough Guy endurance event near Wolverhampton, central England. The Tough Guy event challenges thousands of competitors to run a gruelling course whilst negotiating over 200 obstacles including water, fire, and tunnels.

## Water leak halts surgeries at hospitals

Guardian News and Media  
London

Operations have been cancelled at Manchester’s four main hospitals after a mains leak cut the water supply. Only cancer-related and urgent operations were taking place yesterday morning, and patients were asked not to flush toilets and to wash their hands using antiseptic gel. Bedpans have been handed out and bottled water was available to drink.

The hospitals affected are Manchester Royal Infirmary, Manchester Royal Eye hospital, St Mary’s hospital, and Royal Manchester Children’s hospital. All outpatient services should run as normal.

One woman told the Manchester Evening News that patients had been given sanitary towels to clean themselves. The woman, whose three-day-old daughter was in the neonatal intensive care unit at St Mary’s, said: “It’s ridiculous, there is no cleanliness, no hygiene. On my ward we’ve been given sanitary

towels to clean ourselves.

“All of the patients have only been given a small bottle of water each; it’s not enough. We can’t sterilise anything, we’re not allowed to use the dishwashers.”

At 2.20am yesterday, United Utilities (UU) said the leak had been fixed but that water supplies may not return to normal pressure until they had “reversed the redistribution of water back to its normal configuration”.

Three hours later, the company issued another statement to say it had found another leak on nearby Moss Lane East. UU mobile water tankers have been deployed to help maintain supply.

In a statement on Sunday, the hospital trust said: “Manchester University NHS foundation trust is currently experiencing problems with its water supply due to a mains leak off site.

“We are cancelling all operations planned as a precaution, apart from cancer and any urgent operations. These operations will be rescheduled as soon as possible.”



JUSTICE

Saakashvili faces extradition after losing Ukraine appeal

Ukrainian opposition leader Mikheil Saakashvili said yesterday an appeals court rejected his appeal for protection against possible extradition in a decision he said was politically motivated. The former president of Georgia entered Ukraine last September despite being stripped of his Ukrainian citizenship in a protracted standoff with the Kiev authorities, whom he accuses of corruption. He is wanted in Georgia on four charges including abuse of office. The Ukrainian court upheld an earlier ruling to deny him the status of a person in need of additional protection. "This is yet another decision by (President Petro Poroshenko) and not by the court," Saakashvili said in a post on Facebook.

CONSERVATION

German island's grey seals ravaged by mystery illness

The mysterious death of 23 grey seals in the bay of Greifswald to the south of the island of Ruegen off Germany's north-east coast has almost halved the local population. The deaths could have drastic consequences, the Federal office for Nature Conservation (BfN) said yesterday. In recent years on average some 50 seals have spent the autumn months in the area, until 2016. With the deaths last autumn, almost half of the usual seal population has gone, according to Henning von Nordheim, head of Marine Conservation at the BfN. Von Nordheim said it was not possible to say when the population would recover.

POLITICS

Neo-fascists plant trees to spell Mussolini moniker

A pro-Mussolini slogan spelled out with pine trees on a mountain north-east of Rome that was burnt down last summer has been recreated by neo-fascist activists. In 1939, some 20,000 pine trees were planted on Mount Giano in a formation that, from a distance, spelled "DUX" — a Latin moniker for Italy's fascist dictator meaning "leader." The logo was lost to a forest fire in August, but 200 members of the Casa Pound Italia party reformed it on Sunday by planting 1,000 trees, a spokeswoman told DPA yesterday. The new trees are currently about 40cm tall, meaning "it will take some time" before the Dux sign will again be visible from a distance, she added.

CRACKDOWN

'Gold pistol' seized as Russia arrests top Caucasus officials

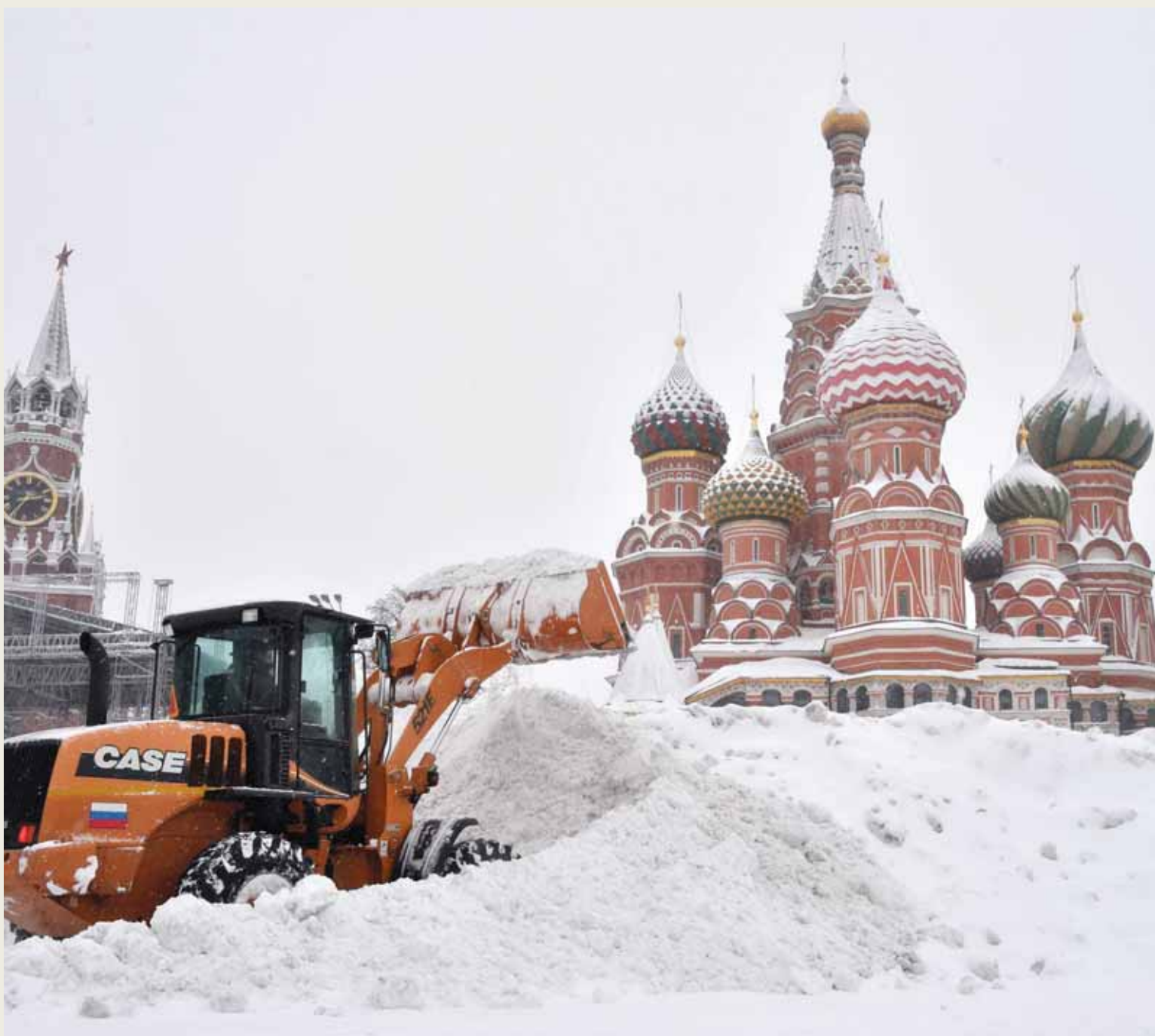
Russian investigators have arrested top officials in the North Caucasus region of Dagestan in an embezzlement probe, seizing a stash of weapons including a gold pistol, officials said yesterday. The Investigative Committee has been looking into suspected embezzlement of budget funds allocated to Dagestan for social programmes, and found that top officials in the regions were implicated, it said in a statement. These include Dagestan's acting prime minister Abusamad Gamidov and his acting deputies Shamil Isayev and Rayudin Yusufov, the committee said. The search of Gamidov's house yielded a "gold TT pistol, Beretta pistols, a (Makarov) pistol and two Kalashnikov rifles".

FASHION PARADE



Models walk the catwalk yesterday during the Simof 2018 (International Flamenco Fashion) in Seville, Spain.

'Snowfall of the century'



A bulldozer shovels snow off Red Square in Moscow yesterday. Russian soldiers have been drafted in to help clear the streets of Moscow and the surrounding region after a record snowfall which delayed flights, felled hundreds of trees, and turned some roads and pavements into an obstacle course. More than a month's worth of snow fell on Moscow within just 36 hours at the weekend as the temperature hovered below zero degrees Celsius, the biggest snowfall in the Russian capital since meteorological records began. Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyarin called the event "the snowfall of the century".

Environmentalists appeal ruling over Norway's Arctic oil licences

AFP  
Oslo

Environmental groups said yesterday they were appealing to Norway's supreme court a ruling allowing the Nordic nation, western Europe's largest oil and gas producer, to grant exploration licenses in the Arctic. In early January, the Oslo district court dismissed a first case by the Norwegian branch of Greenpeace and Natur og Ungdom (Nature and Youth) which had sued the government for granting exploration licenses in the Barents Sea in May 2016. "It is crystal clear that the state is violating the Constitution and our right to a healthy environment by allocating

new oil fields," Natur og Ungdom leader Gaute Eiterjord said in a statement. "The Norwegian oil policy is betraying my generation and threatening our future, which is why we are appealing," he added. The environmentalists accuse Norway of violating an amended article of the country's constitution that guarantees since 2014 the right to a healthy environment. But the Oslo court said the state could not be held responsible for CO2 emissions caused by hydrocarbons which it exports to other countries. "There is already enough carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to seriously damage our future," Truls Gulowsen, head of Greenpeace in Norway, said in a statement.

"By opening up these pristine areas for oil exploration Norway is effectively smuggling its emissions outside of its own borders and furthering climate change, which harms everyone, everywhere," he added. Greenpeace raised 300,000 kroner (\$38,000) in donations after the Oslo court ordered the NGOs to pay for the state's legal costs of 580,000 kroner, Gulowsen told AFP. The state's defence lawyer said he could not comment on the decision as he had not yet received the documents. The appeal signals that the fight against global warming is increasingly brought to courtrooms. The NGOs argue that new oil activities in the fragile Arctic region would be contrary to the 2015 Paris climate ac-

cord, which seeks to limit average global warming to under two degrees Celsius. As oil production has been halved since 2000, Norway has turned its sights toward the far North: the Barents Sea holds 65% of the undiscovered reserves on the Norwegian continental shelf, according to the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate. Latest drilling campaigns, however, have yielded disappointing results. The Norwegian state in May 2016 granted exploration licenses in the Barents Sea to 13 companies, including it's national champion Statoil, US giants Chevron and ConocoPhillips, and Russia's Lukoil. If the Supreme Court of Norway refuses to hear the case, then it will be sent to a lower appeals court.

Abdeslam refuses to answer court in Brussels

Reuters  
Brussels

The prime surviving suspect in the Islamic State attacks in Paris that killed 130 people yesterday refused to answer questions when his trial for a later shooting incident opened in Belgium, defying his accusers and relatives of the victims. In his first appearance since his capture four months after the November 2015 attacks in the French capital, Salah Abdeslam urged the court not to pander to anti-Muslim prejudice as he went on trial for a shootout with police in his native Brussels. His black hair shaggy and beard long, a contrast to the slick, clean-shaven young man last seen on wanted posters across Europe, the 28-year-old former barkeeper faces trial in France next year. And he is not charged over Islamist suicide bombings which struck Brussels four days after he was arrested. "I am accused, so I am here," he told the judge after arriving under heavy police escort from Paris. Refusing to stand or to answer questions, he said: "My silence does not make me a criminal or guilty. That is my defence and I am defending myself by remaining silent." Reciting the Islamic profession of faith and flanked by two masked Belgian counter-terrorism police officers, he said Muslims were treated "without mercy" and presumed guilty. "Judge me. Do as you want with me," he added. "It is in my Lord that I place my trust. I am not afraid of you." He complained of being tired but his voice was firm as he spoke after a morning listening to his co-accused, who admitted to being with Abdeslam during the March 15, 2016, shootout and to have fought with Islamic State in Syria. His refusal to co-operate frustrated some at the court whose relatives died in Paris on November 13, 2015. "Not only did he say he is retreating into silence but he is clearly trying to provoke people by saying he believes only in his God," said Philippe Duperon, whose son was killed at the Bataclan music hall and who now chairs a families' association. Abdeslam's lawyer emphasised the

narrow scope of this first trial by challenging a court move to extend privileges for interested parties to the trial to a group for victims of Islamic State attacks in Brussels on March 22, 2016. Although Abdeslam was already in custody by then and has not been charged over that case, officials believe he was linked to the three bombers. They say the cell brought forward an attack, which killed 32 people, because they feared Abdeslam would reveal their plans under interrogation. The first day of the trial over the shootout in a southern area of Brussels called Forest heard no evidence directly linked to the Paris attacks. By the time of the incident, Abdeslam had been hiding out in his hometown for four months after fleeing Paris on the night his elder brother blew himself up at a cafe. Prosecutors who accuse Abdeslam of helping organise the attacks and ferry former fighters from Syria around Europe say he, too, would have died if his suicide vest had not failed to detonate. His lawyers do not dispute Abdeslam was in Paris during the attacks. He then relied on a network of acquaintances to evade police back in Belgium. They finally stumbled across him when, with French officers, they went to inspect a suspect apartment in Forest. They came under a hail of gunfire which wounded four of them. After a three-hour siege ended with marksmen killing a 35-year-old Algerian called Mohamed Belkaid, police found an arms cache and, crucially, Abdeslam's DNA. That finally led to his arrest three days later at another apartment, in the district of Molenbeek close to his family home. Also detained was his current co-accused, Sofien Ayari, a 24-year-old Tunisian. Prosecutors say Abdeslam and Ayari fled the Forest flat while Belkaid held off police. Ayari's defence yesterday was that he and Abdeslam did not open fire before fleeing. The prosecutor, however, sought 20 years in prison for both, saying they took part in a joint operation to ambush the officers. The trial was adjourned until Thursday.

Confidence grows for deal on new Merkel government even as public support slips

By Deborah Cole, AFP  
Berlin

Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives and the centre-left Social Democrats inched closer yesterday towards a coalition agreement, raising hopes of an end to months of political gridlock in Europe's top economy. A final round of talks was expected to stretch late into the evening after marathon weekend negotiations failed to yield the desired breakthrough on all outstanding differences.

However both sides sounded upbeat about the chance for a deal by today's self-imposed deadline. Volker Bouffier, a deputy leader of Merkel's Christian Democrats (CDU), told reporters he was "confident" the finish line was in sight but "we may need tomorrow morning as well" to iron out the final kinks. In a sign of progress, SPD leader Martin Schulz said agreements had been reached on key European policy issues. "We all agree that the future of our country lies in a strong and united Europe," Schulz wrote in a message to party members.

Germany has been in limbo since an inconclusive general election in September left Merkel and her CDU/CSU bloc without a ruling majority, leading to the longest coalition negotiations in postwar history. The Social Democrats, Germany's second largest party, have served under Merkel in a right-left "grand coalition" for two of her three terms since 2005. But governing in her shadow has cost them vital support and they scored a historic low 20.5% in the election. Their leader Martin Schulz had initially ruled out working with

her in the next four years, preferring to sharpen the SPD's profile in opposition. Merkel at first turned to two smaller parties, the Free Democrats and Greens, to form a new government. But when those talks collapsed in acrimony in November, she had to once more woo a reluctant SPD for a new pact. The SPD has sought to drive up the price for a deal, which it must still sell to its 440,000 members who will vote on the pact in a yes-or-no referendum. That vote is expected to be tight, with leaders aiming to have

a government in place by the end of March. Both main parties reached a breakthrough deal in January when they presented an in-principle agreement to start formal coalition talks. But the last round of negotiations has thrown up several sticking points. SPD demands to shift temporary workers to permanent contracts and to make Germany's health insurance system fairer have run into strong conservative opposition. "You see in the areas where we are still far apart that we are

very different parties and that we come from very different fundamental beliefs," Family Affairs Minister Katarina Barley of the SPD told public radio. At stake for Merkel is whether she leads a stable coalition into her fourth term or risks a fragile minority government or new elections. Both sides hope to avoid going back to the polls amid concerns the drawn-out gridlock could strengthen the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), which scored nearly 13% in the September election. The political impasse in a key

European Union member has had repercussions abroad, holding up French President Emmanuel Macron's push to overhaul the bloc and deepen eurozone integration. Meanwhile, a new Insa survey to be published yesterday in *Bild* newspaper found that the protracted coalition wrangling had sapped support for the main parties. If elections were held now, the CDU/CSU's score would slip from 33% to 30.5%, while the SPD would slump to 17% — meaning the parties would no longer hold a parliamentary majority together. The AfD would garner a record 15%.

SCAM  
Ex-CM Jagannath Mishra  
surrenders in court

Former Bihar chief minister Jagannath Mishra yesterday surrendered before a Ranchi court to serve his sentence in a multi-million rupee fodder scam case. Mishra was convicted and sentenced to five years in jail on January 24. The court had issued a warrant after he failed to appear on January 24. He was sent to Birsu Munda central jail of Ranchi after he surrendered. Mishra along with Rashtriya Janata Dal chief Lalu Prasad Yadav was convicted over the fraudulent withdrawal of Rs336.7mn from the Chaibasa Treasury in 1992-1993. This was the second case in which Mishra was convicted, and the third case in which Yadav was convicted in a fodder scam case. Yadav appeared in a CBI court of Ranchi related to the fraudulent withdrawal Rs1.39bn from the Doranda treasury.

INVESTIGATION  
Court allows CBI to quiz  
Indrani in INX Media case

A New Delhi court yesterday allowed the Central Bureau of Investigation to question till February 7 former media baron Indrani Mukerjea in connection with the INX Media case. Special Judge Sunil Rana sent Mukerjea to a two-day CBI custody when she was presented in court. She will be questioned in the case allegedly involving Karti Chidambaram, son of former finance minister P Chidambaram. On May 15 last year, the CBI had registered an FIR against Karti Chidambaram on charges of criminal conspiracy, cheating, accepting gratification by corrupt or illegal means, influencing public servants and criminal misconduct. Karti Chidambaram allegedly received Rs30.5mn from Mumbai-based INX media, now 9X Media, for helping it get Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) clearance.

PROPOSAL  
Tea garden workers  
reject interim wage hike

Tea garden workers yesterday rejected a proposal by the West Bengal government to the hike the daily wages by Rs17.50. The West Bengal government proposed the interim hike to increase the remuneration from Rs132.50 to Rs150 with effect from January. Usually, a wage agreement for tea workers is executed for a three-year period and the last agreement expired on March 31, 2017. "We are protesting against the minuscule hike in the minimum wage. The last agreement expired on March 31 and why has it not been made effective from April 1, 2017. No decision was taken in the minimum wages advisory committee meeting," convener of the Joint Forum of Trade Unions, an umbrella organisation of trade unions in the tea sector, and Citu's general secretary Zia-ul-Alam said.

POLITICS  
Rahul meets newly-elected  
Congress MPs, MLA

Congress president Rahul Gandhi yesterday met the party's two newly elected MPs and an MLA who won bye-elections in Rajasthan by trouncing candidates of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. They are Karan Singh Yadav, who won the Alwar Lok Sabha seat, Raghu Sharma, who won the Ajmer Lok Sabha seat and Vivek Dhakar who won from the Mandalgarh assembly constituency. The three were accompanied by Rajasthan Congress chief Sachin Pilot, senior party leader C P Joshi and several party leaders from Rajasthan. Earlier in the day, Yadav and Sharma took oath as members of the Lok Sabha. The Congress did not win a single seat in Rajasthan in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. The election to the three seats was held on January 29 and the results were declared on February 1.

CRIME  
Man murders wife, two  
children in Hyderabad

A man strangled his wife and two children to death in Hyderabad yesterday after the couple had a quarrel, police said. The incident occurred at Jillelaguda on the outskirts of Meerpet. According to the police, Harinder Goud, a lab technician who was jobless for a year, thrashed his wife Jyothi, 35, and strangled her to death. He later strangled his son Abhijeet, six, and daughter Sahasra, four, who were asleep in another room. Goud committed the murders at his home in Sumitra Enclave. A police official denied reports that he surrendered at Meerpet police station. Police have registered a case and launched a hunt for him. The bodies were taken to the government-run Osmania General Hospital for autopsy. Jyothi's relatives said Goud earlier used to work at a dental lab was jobless for a year.

Supporters  
seek MNS  
chief's help  
for release  
of Bhujbal

FIANS  
Mumbai

Supporters of former deputy chief minister Chhagan Bhujbal yesterday knocked on the doors of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena president Raj Thackeray, seeking his help for the release of their jailed leader.

A delegation of former legislators and other supporters of Bhujbal, in jail since March 2016, called on the MNS chief claiming that their leader was not being granted bail despite all efforts.

They said Bhujbal was imprisoned though the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) had no proof against him and gross injustice was done to him.

In order to highlight his plight, his supporters plan to take out a rally of half a million activists in Mumbai coinciding with the upcoming budget session of the Maharashtra legislature, they said.

Simultaneously, they said a 'Bhujbal Jodo' campaign has been launched to canvass for his bail, along with his nephew Sameer, who is also in jail since February 2016.

A one-time bitter critic of Bhujbal, Thackeray, however, gave them a sympathetic hearing.

He also indicated that "I am aware of what is going on in the state, and how injustice is being done to the Bhujbals" and assured them of MNS' support.

All India Mahatma Phule Samata Parishad said they will take out a massive procession to Azad Maidan during the legislature session to highlight the wrongs done to Bhujbal by denying him bail.

Among the prominent leaders who called on Thackeray were former MP Devidas Pingale, MLA Jayant Jadhav, former law-makers Narhari Zirwal, Shirish Konval, Dilip Khaire, Ambadas Khaire and office-bearers of various organisations with which the Bhujbals are associated.

Show of solidarity



Members of the Muslim community participate in a Tiranga Yatra, a rally carrying the national flag, in Agra, Uttar Pradesh yesterday. The participants said the rally was non-political and held to demonstrate the Muslim community's firm solidarity with the nation and their love for the national tricolour. They also demanded in a memorandum addressed to the President of India, fair treatment and safety to Muslims and their institutions.

Muslim group  
to decide its  
strategy on  
triple talaq

FIANS  
Hyderabad

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) will decide its future course of action on the triple talaq at a crucial meeting in Hyderabad this week, sources said yesterday.

The decision comes after the central government vowed to go ahead with the passage of the triple talaq bill in parliament.

The three-day general body meeting of the apex body of Indian Muslims, beginning on February 9, will discuss the issue and evolve a strategy for the protection of Muslim Personal Law.

The triple talaq bill and the Babri Masjid case, which is coming up for hearing in the Supreme Court from February 8, top the agenda of the crucial meeting to be presided over by AIMPLB chief Moulana Rabey Hasani Nadvi, the sources said.

AIMPLB, which was set up in 1972 and represents all Islamic schools of thought, will pass a Hyderabad Resolution, spelling out the roadmap for the next one year.

The bill was passed by the Lok Sabha in the last session and is likely to come up in the Rajya Sabha during ongoing budget session.

The meeting is expected to take a decision on the proposal to introduce a new provision in its model nikahnama (marriage contract) in which the man has to commit that he will not give instant triple talaq. The board believes that this amendment will help in dissuading men from giving triple talaq in one sitting, considered the worst form of divorce among Muslims.

The board has termed the bill, which criminalised triple talaq, as interference in the Muslim Personal Law. It is of the view that the rate of Muslim men divorcing their wives through triple talaq is very low and even this practice can be curbed by creating awareness.

**The triple talaq bill and the Babri Masjid case, which is coming up for hearing in the Supreme Court from February 8, top the agenda of the crucial meeting to be presided over by AIMPLB chief Moulana Rabey Hasani Nadvi, the sources said**

The board will review the progress made in "Islah-e-Moashira", or the country-wide campaign for reforms in Muslim society, aimed at creating awareness against social evils like dowry and triple talaq.

The board will take stock of the cases relating to Muslim Personal Law pending in various courts and discuss how it can implead itself to protect the Shariah.

It will also discuss the effective use of social media platforms to inform people about its activities and create public awareness.

Nearly 600 prominent Muslim leaders including religious scholars, heads of various Muslim organisations, politicians, lawyers, academics and other eminent personalities from different walks of life will attend the conclave.

The 51-member executive, including five women, will meet on the evening of February 9 to ratify the minutes of the previous general body meeting held in Kolkata in 2016. Secretary general Moulana Syed Wali Rahmani will brief the members on the board's activities since previous executive held in September last year.

The general body meeting will be attended by both the board members and invitees. The board has 102 founding-members and 149 general members. They include 30 women.

The meeting will also discuss and approve the annual budget. There will also be a debate on the funds required for fighting the legal cases.

All committees of the board including panels on the Babri Masjid, 'Islah-e-Moashira', the legal committee and the women's wing will present their reports.

Arrangements are in full swing for the meeting at Deccan College of Medical Sciences run by the family of All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul Muslimeen chief Asaduddin Owaisi. The Hyderabad MP, who is the chairman of the reception committee for the meeting, and his younger brother and MIM leader in Telangana assembly, Akbaruddin Owaisi are personally supervising the arrangements.

Elaborate arrangements for the meeting have been made at the newly-constructed indoor stadium of the college.

The three-day conclave will conclude with a massive public meeting on the night of February 11 at Darussalam, the headquarters of MIM.

Dubai imposes travel  
ban on Kodyeri's son

FIANS  
Thiruvananthapuram

Kerala Marxist leader Kodyeri Balakrishnan's elder son Binoy Balakrishnan, who is caught in an alleged financial fraud case in Dubai, has been prevented from leaving the emirate, his brother said yesterday.

"There is a travel ban on him. He will remain there and deal with the case, according to the laws there," Bineesh Kodyeri told reporters here.

Refuting media reports about his brother, Bineesh said: "What kinds of news have you (media) been giving? You were saying that he (Binoy) has to pay Rs13 crore to a Dubai-based businessman. Today the businessman has said there is a dispute of Rs1.72 crore only. Since my brother has no urgent need to travel to India, he will remain in Dubai and will come once things are settled," the younger son of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) state secretary said.

"All the wrong news is being circulated, and we all know that this is being purposely done because of the CPM currently going on. Just because we are the sons of the Kerala CPM state secretary it's unfair to say we can't engage in business," Bineesh said.

The case surfaced last month when a three-page letter dated January 5 from H I A Al Marzooqi, sponsor of a Dubai company, stated that he has started legal procedures against Binoy for alleged fraud of Rs130mn.

The Arab businessman through lawyer had said he would hold a press conference in Thiruvananthapuram yesterday.

However, a court in Kollam district last week directed that there should be no reference by anyone to the case till March 6. The court order came on a petition by Sreejith Pillai, son of a Left supported legislator Vijayan Pillai who according to Marzooqi owes him money.

Sreejith Pillai and Binoy are

friends and both have business interests in Dubai. Following the court order, the press conference was cancelled.

The state units of the opposition Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party asked the veteran Marxist politician to quit public life.

State BJP president Kumanem Rajasekheran said Kodyeri had lied last month that there was "no case against my son in Dubai".

"He should exit public life, but not before telling all what his son's business is. If he has nothing to hide, why can't he reveal the nature of his son's business in Dubai. Or, is it some business that is shameful and can't be revealed? What has come out is only a tip of the iceberg. In the coming days, even bigger scams will surface," said Rajasekheran.

Senior Congress leader Benny Behanan said Kodyeri should immediately quit since reports go contrary to what he has been claiming so far.

Fire at GIFT City



Fire-fighters try to douse a blaze at the temporary administrative office of Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) in Gandhinagar yesterday.

'Chennai air quality  
consistently poor'

FIANS  
Chennai

Air quality in the coastal city of Chennai in the past two months was consistently poor with all the samples designated as at least 'unhealthy' as per US standards, an international expert said.

Levels of toxic metal manganese in the air during this period averaged 55% higher than they were in April 2017, while lead levels were nearly three times higher in two months than they were in April.

Mark Chernaik, a scientist with the Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide who studied the reports, said that five of the samples in Chennai in the past two months reached a level of 'very unhealthy' and two of them 'hazardous' under the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Air Quality Index.

All of the 12 samples substantially exceeded the Indian

24-hour National Ambient Air Quality Standard for PM (tiny particulate matter) of 60 micrograms (Aug)/m3.

According to Chernaik, the levels of PM 2.5 (a crucial indicator of dangerous pollution) in December and January averaged 165 Aug/m3, 35% higher than PM 2.5 in April.

High levels of manganese, a neurotoxicant, cause adverse neurobehavioural health effects. It averaged 0.16 Aug/m3 in two months. The World Health Organisation prescribes an annual average standard of 15 Ig/m3.

Likewise, exposure to another neurotoxicant lead causes irreversible mental retardation in children. It averaged 0.16 Aug/m3 in the two months, exceeding the US Environmental Protection Agency's National Ambient Air Quality standard for lead of 0.15 Aug/m3 on a three-month rolling basis.

Chernaik says the air quality in Chennai seems heavily impacted by re-suspension of dust.

# Billionaire jeweller under probe over \$44mn bank fraud

**Agencies**  
New Delhi

Federal agents said yesterday they had launched an investigation into billionaire jeweller Nirav Modi, one of the country's richest men, over accusations that he and others defrauded a state bank of \$44mn.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said it was acting on a complaint from the Punjab National Bank that Nirav Modi and others had conspired with bank

officials to fraudulently obtain advances for making payments to overseas suppliers.

A spokeswoman for Nirav Modi declined to comment.

The CBI's announcement of an investigation and registration of a complaint mark some of the early stages in an inquiry and do not mean the case will ever go to trial.

The bank alleged that Modi, his brother Nishal, wife Ami and Mehul Chinubhai Choksi, all partners of Diamond R US, Solar Exports and Stellar Diamonds and wrongf

ul loss", CBI officials said.

"The public servants committed abuse of official position to cause pecuniary advantage to Diamond R US, Solar Exports and Stellar Diamonds and wrongful loss of Rs280.70 crore to Punjab National Bank during 2017," the FIR has alleged.

The bank has alleged in the complaint that a fraudulent issuance of Letters of Undertakings (LOU) took place on January 16, 2018 for and on behalf of the firms, which approached the bank and presented a set of



Modi: under probe.

import documents to the branch with a request to allow buyers' credit for making payment to overseas suppliers.

The bank officials requested the firms to furnish 100% cash margin for LOU for raising buyers' credit.

The firms contested this, saying they availed this facility in the past also, the bank alleged.

However, branch records did not reveal details of any such facility granted to the firms, it said.

The bank claimed that its deputy manager Gokul Nath Shetty and Manoj Kharat had fraudulently issued LOUs without following the prescribed procedure by obtaining the required request applications, documents and approval of authorities and without making any entries in the bank's systems.

According to Forbes, Modi has

a net worth of \$1.84bn through his jewellery design and retail businesses, making him the 85th richest person in India.

The bank had filed a complaint saying public money "seems to have been embezzled by committing fraud", the CBI said.

CBI spokesman Abhishek Dayal said raids were conducted over the weekend at 21 locations linked to companies of Modi and others accused in the case.

Modi's residence was also searched, Dayal said.

Modi's flagship diamond retail firm, Firestar International Lim-

ited, released a statement saying the case "has no affiliation, legal or otherwise" with the company. The CBI did not name Firestar in the complaint.

Earlier, in January 2017, the Income Tax department had raided over 50 offices and residential premises of Modi, and seized cash, jewellery and several documents that allegedly revealed tax evasion by his firms.

The agency had allegedly found evidence of bogus purchases and cash sales that were not recorded in the books of the firms.

## Hearing in Loya case turns acrimonious as lawyers clash

**IAN S**  
New Delhi

The Supreme Court hearing on the death of Special CBI court judge B M Loya turned acrimonious yesterday with lawyers exchanging barbs after one of the petitioners seeking an independent probe appeared to be diluting his stand.

The heated exchanges between senior lawyers Dushyant Dave and Pallav Sisodia erupted after Dave accused the latter of "sabotage".

While Dave is appearing for Mumbai Lawyers Association, Sisodia is appearing for the Maharashtra-based journalist Bandhuj Samghaji Lone. Both had moved the top court seeking an independent probe into the death of Loya, who was presiding over the special Central Bureau of Investigation court holding trial into the Sohrabuddin Shaikh staged shootout case in which Bharatiya Janata Party president Amit Shah was one of the accused.

Shah was later discharged.

Asking the bench of Chief Justice Dipak Misra, Justice A M Khanwilkar and Justice D Y Chandrachud to pass "appropriate orders" including about "accountability of persons responsible", Sisodia, in his two page note said: "...an independent probe can't be one-way traffic in which persons making allegations can just 'hit and run' without any responsibility to damages caused to the reputation, prestige and faith in institutions" including the top court and judiciary as a whole.

Dave, who had concluded his arguments last Friday, described the position articulated by Sisodia as "sabotage".

At this Sisodia, who was sitting close to Dave, got up and said: "You can go to hell or heaven or anywhere... we don't care."

An agitated Dave retorted that they may not care but he will continue to raise the issue and targeted senior counsel Harish Salve saying he had appeared for Shah and was now appearing for the Maharashtra government and is protecting Shah.

Sisodia responded, saying Shah was "capable of protecting himself".

Trying to restore calm, Justice Chandrachud said: "You can't shout. You have to listen when the judge is speaking. You shall not shout me down."

As Dave said: "I will not listen to you", the judge snapped back: "Then we will not listen to you."

"Please don't reduce the level of dialogue in the court to the level of fish market," Justice Chandrachud said, pointing to the portrait of two former CJs - Harilal J Kania and Bijan Kumar Mukherjee in the court room.

Recalling his days as a junior lawyer when he appeared in the top court and the level of discourse in the court was dignified and of certain level, he said now it has "denigrated so much that it is becoming oppressive".

Dave then said he was "begging the court to see what is happening" and urged the judges to listen to their conscience.

"Please don't remind us of our conscience," replied Justice Chandrachud, adding: "We know how to listen to our conscience."

Sisodia too got his share of disapproval from the bench when the judge said: "You should not have used those words. Courtesy begets courtesy."

Salve, who has been on the receiving end of Dave since the beginning of the hearing, however added: "Sometimes courtesy does not beget courtesy."

## TDP protests against 'injustice'



Telugu Desam Party MPs stage a demonstration outside the parliament urging the central government to take steps to fulfil promises made to Andhra Pradesh at the time of the state's bifurcation, in New Delhi yesterday. The party protested against the 'injustice' done to the state in the federal budget unveiled on February 1.

# PM has ended politics of appeasement: Shah

**IAN S**  
New Delhi

Bharatiya Janata Party chief Amit Shah yesterday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has put an end to the politics of "dynasty, caste and appeasement."

However, Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad said they wanted the "old Bharat" of Mahatma Gandhi where Hindus and Muslims could give blood for each other.

On a day the upper house of parliament a lively debate, opposition parties, including Trinamool Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party, accused the government of failing to fulfil its promise of "sabka saath, sabka

vikas (development for all)."

The Telugu Desam Partyt, a key ally of the BJP, said the central government was meting out step-motherly treatment to Andhra Pradesh.

Shah initiated the debate in the Rajya Sabha and in his maiden speech countered the Congress over its frequent slamming of the government over jobs and goods and services tax (GST).

Shah pitched for simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies and accused the Congress of "opposing" the triple talaq bill which he said Modi had brought to give rights, equality and social security to women.

He took on Congress president Rahul Gandhi over his description of the GST as "Gabbar

Singh Tax" and asked "is this (GST) dacoity?" He said taxes collected under the GST go to fund programmes for the poor and soldiers.

Admitting that unemployment was a problem, Shah claimed it had been created during the 55 years of Congress rule. He said the BJP was finding a solution through programmes such as Skill India, Start-up India, Stand-up India and Mudra loans.

He also slammed Congress leaders for their criticism of Modi over his remarks in an interview that people earning Rs200 a day selling 'pakodas' (fritters) can be considered employed, saying: "Selling pakodas is not shameful but comparing it with begging was"

"Today if a person is earning livelihood by selling pakodas, tomorrow his son would become a big industrialist. A tea vendor's son can become the prime minister of this country," he said.

Citing the BJP's repeated victories in several assembly polls, he said that "people's mandate" was the best way to judge the performance. On the Gujarat result, he took a veiled dig at Congress saying, "We can't help it if some people see victory even in their defeat."

Stating there were "three cancers" - dynastic politics, casteism and appeasement, he said "we can proudly say today that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has uprooted all of them from the Indian political system"

On the issue of simultaneous polls, Shah said "it will save money and prevent the need of frequent elections"

Calling for a concerted debate on the issue, he said it might seem the BJP has an advantage today but it can be the advantage of some other party tomorrow.

Azad questioned the government's vision of "New India".

"We do not want new Bharat, we want old Bharat where there is unity between all religions and Hindus and Muslims give blood for each other. This was old Bharat which you polarised to form the government. We want a Bharat where there is no fear," he said.

He accused the BJP of seeking to polarise people and divide the Muslim community.

## 64% of antibiotic cocktails sold in India 'illegal': study

**AFP**  
Paris

Nearly two-thirds of multi-drug antibiotic cocktails sold in India between 2007 and 2012 were unapproved, researchers said yesterday, warning such "illegal" compounds were fuelling the spread of drug-resistant diseases.

In total, 118 different types of "fixed-dose combination" antibiotics - formulations combining two or more drugs in a single pill - were sold in India in the five years under review, a team reported in the *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*.

Of these, "64% were not approved by the national drugs regulator, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation", they said.

The sale of unapproved drugs is illegal in India.

The 118 formulations were sold as 3,307 different brand-

named products, produced by 476 pharmaceutical companies - including a dozen multinationals, said the team.

There were also 86 single-drug formulations, of which 93% had regulatory approval.

"Selling unapproved, unscrutinised antibiotics undermines measures in India to control antimicrobial resistance," said the study's lead author Patricia McGettigan of the Queen Mary University in London.

"Multinational companies should explain the sale of products in India that did not have the approval of their own national regulators and, in many cases, did not even have the approval of the Indian regulator," she said in a statement.

India already has one of the highest rates of drug resistance in the world, said the team, coupled with one of the highest antibiotic consumption rates.

The UN warns that the emergence of drug-resistant

germs is a "global health emergency" threatening progress made by modern medicine, and risking a future in which people die of ailments that are easily curable today.

A report commissioned by the British government warned in 2014 that antibiotics-resistant infections could kill 10mn people per year globally by 2050, making it the leading cause of death over heart disease and cancer.

Bacteria acquire drug resistance partly through exposure to antibiotics.

Instead of killing the germs, the wrong type of antibiotic or the wrong dose can stimulate the bugs to fight back - either by spontaneous DNA mutations that confer immunity, or by transferring resistant genes between themselves.

This can also happen when humans are exposed to antibiotics in animals they consume, or in the water or soil they come into contact with.

## Soldiers killed in clashes



Relatives console Artika, 13, whose father, army soldier Havaladar Roshan Lal, was killed in clashes along the Line of Control (LoC) in Tarkundi and Sunderbani areas of Rajouri in Jammu and Kashmir on February 4, at Nichla village in Samba district, about 45km from Jammu, yesterday. Lal was among four soldier killed in the clashes.

## Modi to visit Palestine, hold talks with Abbas

**Agencies**  
New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Palestine during a brief tour of the Middle East, the foreign ministry said yesterday, just weeks after hosting Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu.

Modi will meet Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas in an overture seen as India's effort to balance its decades-old support for the occupied territories against its growing closeness to Israel.

The premier will visit Ramallah first on his three-day tour of the region between February 9 and 12, which will also take in Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

External Affairs Ministry spokesman Raveesh Kumar said Modi's visit to Palestine would be his first, though the Indian premier has met Abbas on three previous occasions.

The leaders are expected to discuss information technology,

health and tourism during the brief visit, Kumar added.

Modi will also address a joint press conference and attended a banquet.

New Delhi has long backed Palestine's quest for nationhood and Modi has articulated support for an independent state existing peacefully alongside Israel.

Modi became the first Indian leader in history to visit Israel in July 2017.

The prime minister will depart for the UAE on Saturday, where he will address a summit in Dubai and meet business leaders before travelling to Oman for further engagements.

Kumar also said the UAE has done a lot in meeting India's foreign direct investment (FDI) requirements.

"These include an investment of \$500mn in low cost housing. They are also looking at ports, logistic centres and food parks."

The UAE is also the first partner of India's National Investment and Infrastructure Fund and invested \$1bn as the anchor investor.



# Venezuela man fears for life as deportation from US looms

**Tribune News Service**  
Miami

Ricardo Querales fears that his days are numbered. He has HIV.

Querales showed up in mid-January at the headquarters of the immigration and customs enforcement in Miramar, Florida, to comply with a routine supervision order in place for several years as part of deportation proceedings. Hundreds go

through this process regularly.

But on this visit, Querales got dreaded news. He was ordered to return at the end of February with passport and plane ticket in hand for voluntary deportation to his homeland.

“You are sending me to my death!” Querales, 43, told the immigration official. “This is anti-human rights. In Venezuela, there is no medicine and every day someone with AIDS disappears.”

He hopes that the US gov-

ernment will acknowledge the shortage of antiretroviral drugs to fight HIV infection in a country that is going through a spiralling humanitarian crisis and won’t force him to leave because of non-violent criminal charges that revoked his asylum status.

Marcial De Sautu, an immigration lawyer, said that Querales should file for a request for temporary deferral of deportation or removal.

“There is a very serious crisis in Venezuela, and if he has HIV

and there are no drugs there, he should ask that they not take him out of the country for humanitarian reasons,” De Sautu said.

In recent months, Venezuelan health organisations have reported that the death rate among HIV patients has increased because of the shortage of antiretrovirals.

Originally from Maracaibo, in western Venezuela, Querales arrived in the US in 2003, escaping political persecution and insecurity. A year later, an immigra-

tion judge approved his asylum request.

Within three years, he joined the increasing number of Latino men who are HIV positive. Between 2006 – the year he got his diagnosed – and 2015, HIV diagnoses in Miami-Dade county among Latino men increased 70%, according to statistics from the Florida department of health.

Querales, a hair stylist, first got into trouble with law enforcement nearly a decade ago after a friend who borrowed his car died

of an overdose on Miami Beach.

When police arrived at his home the next day, they found a small bag of methamphetamine. He was charged with controlled substance possession and drug paraphernalia possession with intent to use. He was convicted in 2009 and served 30 days in jail.

He was arrested a second time after a police raid at a house that he was visiting. No charges were filed against Querales but he was turned over to ICE custody and spent six months in detention. It

was during this time that his political asylum was revoked.

At the end of 2011, an immigration judge signed his deportation order.

The order was not immediately carried out. Querales was allowed to resume his life in Miami but in 2014 was placed on “Order of Supervision,” which requires periodic check-in with ICE officials.

As the crisis deepened in Venezuela, deportation was postponed.

## Crime-ridden Brazil gets off to a bloody start in 2018

**AFP**  
Rio de Janeiro

The year was just a few hours old when a prison riot near the capital Brasilia left nine inmates dead – two of them decapitated – and set the stage for what is proving to be a deadly 2018 in Brazil.

Since then, the country has seen a wave of violence that prompted Defence Minister Raul Jungmann this week to declare that “the security system is broken.”

There have been 688 shooting incidents reported in Rio de Janeiro state in January, many of them focused in the same few sprawling, poor neighbourhoods known as favelas where police are barely in control.

Then came the massacre of 14 people at a nightclub in the north-eastern city of Fortaleza, followed by the deaths of 10 people in clashes at a prison nearby.

While Brazil has long suffered high crime and Rio in particular is beset by drug gang wars, there was dismay this week in the “Marvelous City” at television footage of drivers on a main artery being forced to stop and hide behind their cars because of shooting between police and traffickers nearby.

Jungmann told Globo television that urgent change is needed. “We have to take the necessary measures before it’s too late and we find ourselves on the trajectory of other countries,” he said, referring especially to Mexico.

But the task of taming criminal gangs and adequately training the police continues to elude politicians, partly because the root of the chaos stretch far beyond security and into poverty, poor education, poor municipal

services, racism and deep inequality.

Drug trafficking gangs, meanwhile, have ever better weapons and operate often with impunity in favelas, while their leaders issue orders from prisons that the authorities only partially control.

On the other side are police forces – notably in Rio – crippled by corruption, poor funding, and a military style training that does not necessarily work in modern policing.

Jungmann said “penetration of crime throughout the police has to be combatted.”

Some trace Brazil’s seemingly insoluble crime problems to the 1988 constitution, written at the end of a two-decades long military dictatorship.

This gave almost all budgetary and strategic responsibility for security to individual state governments. “Public security was like the stepchild.

We were coming out of a dictatorship and no one wanted to talk about public security,” said Jose Mariano Beltrame, Rio’s former security secretary.

“Why were health and education put under the federal government? Because they were considered important, they won votes. Today we’re paying for that.”

Arthur Trindade, a former security chief for the capital and now at the University of Brasilia, said “there is no doubt that Brazil needs a new federal agreement. Public security has to be a federal matter.”

Trindade said the national security body is understaffed, and that the police do not even have their own system for collecting reliable statistical data.

Organisations like the Brazilian Public Security Forum fill the gap when it comes to data.



Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores gesture as they arrive for a rally to commemorate the 26th anniversary of late Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez's failed coup attempt in Caracas, Venezuela.

# China flays US criticism of ties with Venezuela

**Reuters**  
Beijing

China’s support for Venezuela has benefited ordinary people and been broadly welcomed, the foreign ministry said yesterday after the US Treasury accused China of aiding Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro’s government with murky oil-for-loan investments.

In a Friday speech at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, the US treasury’s top economic diplomat, David Malpass, said China’s focus on commodities and opaque financing deals had hurt, not

helped, countries in the region.

His attack on China’s role in aiding the Venezuelan government came a day after US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, ahead of a five-day tour of Latin America, raised the prospect of a military coup in the oil-rich country.

Speaking in Beijing, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said financial co-operation between the two countries was set by companies and financial bodies in both nations on commercial, win-win principles.

Loans were totally in accordance with international standards and benefited local people, he added.

“What the US said is baseless

and extremely irresponsible,” Geng said.

Co-operation between China and Venezuela had supported the building of more than 10,000 low-cost houses, electricity generation and the cost of household appliances for 3mn Venezuelan homes on low incomes, he added.

“China-Venezuela co-operation has favourably promoted Venezuela’s socio-economic development and has been welcomed and supported by all levels of society,” Geng said.

“A stable Venezuela accords with the interests of all sides.”

China last week said the US was disrespecting Latin America after Tillerson warned countries in the region against

excessive reliance on economic ties with China.

The Trump administration has imposed individual and economic sanctions on Venezuela’s government for rights abuses and corruption.

Maduro has accused Washington of seeking to oust him to improve access to the Opec nation’s oil wealth.

China and Venezuela have a close diplomatic and business relationship, especially in energy.

China has repeatedly brushed off widespread condemnation from the US, Europe and others about the situation in the country.

China has said it is confident in Venezuela’s ability to

properly handle its debts.

Venezuela has borrowed billions of dollars from Russia and China, primarily through oil-for-loan deals that have crimped the country’s hard currency revenue by requiring oil shipments to be used to service those loans.

Since 2007, China has loaned more than \$50bn to Venezuela through an oil-for-loans arrangement that helped Caracas reduce reliance on US energy markets.

But the flow of funds from Beijing has slowed since 2014, when abundant crude oil led to a crash in oil markets and made China less interested in maintaining its alliance with Venezuela.

## Singer to face author in Costa Rica poll runoff

**Reuters**  
San Jose

Former TV anchor and evangelical singer Fabricio Alvarado Munoz will face a centre-left fiction writer in Costa Rica’s presidential election runoff, definitively ending decades of a two-party system in the peaceful Central American nation.

The Christian songwriter decisively won the first round on Sunday but after failing to reach 40% of the votes must now compete in the runoff on April 1 against ex-government minister Carlos Alvarado Quesada, who was also once a singer in a prog-rock band.

The victory of the unrelated Alvarados reflects the growing influence of relative outsiders on politics in Latin America, where some two-thirds of the region’s population can choose new governments this year.

“Costa Rica went to vote and the message was clear, it doesn’t want more of the same,” Alvarado Munoz, 43, said in a speech to sup-

porters as the final results came in.

The shift has hastened the decline of a centrist two-party system that stretched back decades, and led to the rise of Alvarado Munoz on a ticket of fiercely opposing gay marriage.

Neither of the candidates is from one of the two parties that have dominated politics since the mid-20th century, and they represent a widening of the right-left divide.

Alvarado Munoz, the telegenic author of Christian songs such as “Your love is everything”, won 24.8% of the vote. He was elected to the national assembly in 2014 as the only federal deputy for the National Restoration Party (PRN) formed by Christians from another party.

Late on Sunday, the PRN appeared to have massively increased its presence in the national assembly to 14 seats.

The party opposes the progressive policies of President Luis Guillermo Solis, such as same-sex marriage, in vitro fertilization and sex education in schools.

“There’s nothing more progres-

sive than defending life and family,” Alvarado Munoz said on Sunday.

Even though Costa Rica’s 3.3mn voters mostly describe themselves as conservative, Alvarado Quesada appears to have benefited by energising voters worried by the strident tone of the campaign.

The former Procter & Gamble employee also tried to connect with young voters, highlighting his university rock band Dramatika and career as a fiction writer.

He has a masters degree from Britain’s Sussex University, and his last novel was titled “Brighton Season”.

“The Costa Rica of the 21st century needs a government that knows how to advance with strength, love and happiness, the agenda of equality,” Alvarado Quesada said in a speech on Sunday evening. He won 21.6 % of the vote in the first round.

The two Alvarados will now fight for the votes of third place Antonio Alvarez Desanti, who accepted defeat on Sunday evening with 18.8% of the vote, and the 10 other candidates from the first round.



Carlos Alvarado, presidential candidate of Costa Rica’s governing Citizen Action Party, speaks during a press conference after Costa Rica’s presidential election in San Jose, Costa Rica, yesterday.

## Blow to Correa in Ecuador elections

**Reuters**  
Quito

Ecuadoreans have voted to prevent presidents from holding more than two terms in office, according to the elections council, a win for President Lenin Moreno that blocks his mentor-turned-adversary Rafael Correa from returning to power.

The results from the referendum, called by Moreno, roll back a measure Correa pushed through Congress in 2015 to allow unlimited presidential re-election.

“The victory of the ‘Yes’ vote opens the path for us to work together, confrontation is a thing of the past,” Moreno said in a televised broadcast, an apparent reference to Correa’s famously combative style. “The old politicians will not return.”

Moreno may now be emboldened to remove Correa allies from key government posts, and financial markets will likely see the result as confirming a more politically

and fiscally conservative future for the South American oil exporting country.

The referendum is legally binding and implies a direct challenge to the constitution.

Voters also gave broad backing to six other measures, including limits on oil production and mining in environmentally sensitive areas, and stiffer penalties for corruption.

Some of those will require the involvement of Congress.

Correa said the referendum was aimed at destroying his legacy. “The struggle continues,” he wrote via Twitter. “We cannot accept such a constitutional rupture.”

Correa led Ecuador between 2007 and 2017, a period that saw him win support for anti-poverty programmes but criticism for excessive confrontation and for allowing corruption to flourish.

He declined to run in 2017 and tapped Moreno, then vice president, as the ruling party candidate.

He now says Moreno is a “traitor” seeking to annihilate him politically.



# Chinese shipping worker shot dead in Karachi

Reuters  
Karachi

A Chinese man working with a shipping company in Pakistan was shot dead yesterday in what police described as a targeted attack in Karachi, police and hospital officials said.

While there was no claim of responsibility and the motive was not immediately clear, China in December warned its nationals in Pakistan of plans for imminent attacks on Chinese targets there.

Chinese presence is growing in Pakistan as Beijing has pledged \$57bn for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a flagship “Belt and Road” project that first focused on Chinese

firms building roads and power stations but is now expanding to include setting up industries.

The man, identified as Chen Zhu, 45, was in his car when he was attacked in an upmarket area of the port city of Karachi.

At least 10 shots were fired at the car, and Chen suffered a single bullet wound in the head, police said.

“The incident appears to be targeted attack, (it) doesn’t look like a mugging,” Azad Khan, deputy inspector general of Karachi’s south zone, said.

“The victim is associated with Cosco Shipping Lines Co, a Chinese shipping company. We are trying to get further details,” Khan added.

Another officer, Javed Akbar Riaz, told Reuters that Chen had an employee ID from Cosco.

The shipping company could not be reached for comment in Karachi.

Tens of thousands of Chinese nationals have come to Pakistan, but the new arrivals face dangers, creating a headache for Pakistani security officials.

Islamic State’s abduction and killing last June of two Chinese nationals in the southwestern province of Baluchistan highlighted the security risks that have put off many Western companies.

Karachi, Pakistan’s largest city, still has a reputation for gang shootings and other violence, despite a paramilitary crackdown that began in 2013 and sharply reduced killings.

Hospital officials said Zhu was admitted in a critical condition, but later died.



Pakistani paramedics push a stretcher carrying an injured Chinese national to a hospital after an attack by gunmen in Karachi yesterday.

## ‘PTI chief used govt chopper for 74 hours’

Internews  
Islamabad

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province government has admitted to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan’s use of government-owned helicopters for 74 hours.

According to local media, not only Imran but others in his political circle, including Awn Chaudhry and Abrar-ul-Haq, had also been using the helicopters.

The helicopters were in the PTI chief’s use despite law suggesting that even ministers cannot bring them to their use, sources said.

Quoting the aviation laws, sources said it was a crime for political leaders to use government-owned helicopters even for political purposes.

Besides the party chief and his friends, the helicopters have also been used by KP Chief Minister Pervaiz Khattak, who used the aircraft to go to the wedding of KP Minister for Higher Education Mush-taq Ghani’s relative, sources added.

However, a handout issued by the KP government a day earlier stated that the PTI-led government in the province had not used the helicopters for any purpose “other than official business of the government”.

“Imran Khan has never used any of the official helicopters and/or for his private or personal use, so the question of hiring a chopper at commercial rates does not arise,” the handout reads.

“A government helicopter anyway is never given for private use.”

It adds that the trips mentioned in a section of the media were all official visits.

On January 29, Geo News reported that the KP government spent millions of rupees on Imran’s use of the provincial government’s helicopters.

The PTI chairman also said that he welcomed the examining of the issue by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). He expressed hope that the accountability body would also look into the “abuse of official planes, helicopters by Zardaris and Sharifs”.

## FM radio in tribal region restarts transmission

The lone private FM radio station in Bajaur Agency has resumed its transmission several weeks after the authorities shut it down over unknown reasons, local people and officials said yesterday. Though the residents did not mention when the FM Shamal 98-6, owned by former lawmaker and PPP leader Syed Akhunzada Chattan resumed its transmission, they said they had been listening to its programmes for last two days.

The radio station went off air in mid-December 2017. According to the people, radio Shamal was popular not only in Bajaur Agency but also in neighbouring Lower and Upper Dir districts and Mohmand Agency.

An official said yesterday that FM Shamal had resumed its transmission following a meeting of officials of local administration and the radio’s management. He added the officials were earlier reluctant to allow the channel to resume transmission as it did not have a proper licence from the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra).

However, the official said the channel was allowed to go on air after its management presented them with the NOC issued by the Fata Secretariat, and also convinced them that Pemra’s jurisdiction was not extended to the tribal areas. Zahid Utmani, station director of FM Shamal 98-6, said that the radio resumed its broadcasts a few days go after obtaining permission from the local authorities. He rejected the perception that the radio channel resumed transmission on some conditions.

# UK property law to spell trouble for Pakistani politicians

Internews  
Islamabad

The United Kingdom government has introduced new rules giving unprecedented powers to law enforcement agencies to crack down on properties and assets amassed through “dirty money”.

Under the new rules, which are designed to stop corrupt people from using Britain as a safe haven, individuals can be fined and jailed if they make misleading statements.

The order that came into force recently allows authorities to freeze and recover property of more than £50,000 if individuals cannot explain why they own assets worth more than their income and show they have acquired them legally.

The new law can also be problematic for some Pakistani politicians as the enforcement authorities don’t need to show that they actually own the property as properties owned by their “associates” can also be subject to the new powers.

Another thing that goes against Pakistani politicians is lower threshold as “a UW0 [Unexplained Wealth Order] made in relation to a non-EEA [European Economic Area] PEP [Politically Exposed Person] would not require suspicion of serious criminality”.

London-based anti-corruption group Transparency International (TI) says it has identified properties worth £4.4bn in Britain that should be consid-

ered as possible candidates for the new legislation.

It has already prepared a list of five cases which it thinks could be investigated without any delay, including Avenfield House flats case involving former prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

Describing Sharif as the suspected owner of the four Avenfield House flats (16, 16A, 17 and 17A) worth at least £8mn, TI noted that the land registry documents showed that the four properties were owned by two companies registered in the BVI: Nescoll Limited and Nielsen Limited.

“According to information published as part of Panama Papers, these companies were controlled by the former prime minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif. In 2017, Pakistani authorities initiated an investigation into these assets, which found that they were purchased without a mortgage between 1993 and 1995, just after Sharif reported a growth in wealth without any plausible declared source of income. In July 2017, Sharif was removed from the office after the investigation found that he had failed to disclose these properties on his official asset declaration,” added TI.

Sharif is not the only politician to have links to properties in the UK as media reports and court cases have mentioned many other Pakistani politicians with links to controversial properties and assets and those can be targeted by the new powers given to the British authorities.

# KP province’s first DNA lab to function from today

Internews  
Peshawar

The first-ever DNA laboratory is ready to start operations after a delay of two years owing to non-appointment of staff and procurement of investigation kits from abroad.

Health Secretary Abid Majeed will inaugurate the lab at the forensic medicine and toxicology department of Khyber Medical College (KMC) today.

As opposed to Punjab Forensic Science Agency (PFSA), which was built at a cost of Rs4bn, the facility at KMC has been established by spending Rs45mn only.

Punjab’s lab has also been getting equipments and machines from Austria and other agencies while the KP’s lab was set up from its own resources.

Sources said that the delay was caused due to KMC’s inability to open letter of credit (LoC) at the National Bank of Pakistan to be able to import the kits from the US-based manufacturer.

The provincial government approved establishment of DNA facility in 2013 to test specimens for police in criminal and other cases but it couldn’t be started even after its completion in late 2015.

The government enforced Medical Teaching Institutions Reforms Act, 2015 against which doctors and paramedics obtained stay orders from the court and appointments at the institutions covered by the law, including KMC, couldn’t be made.

Staff for the DNA lab was appointed only after the court vacated the stay against the new law in January 2017. However, the facility didn’t go op-

erational despite home department’s permission, authorising it to perform investigation into cases for police and on the directives of the courts in June.

In December 2016, KMC applied to open LoC at NBP to import the kits but then contacted the Bank of Khyber after lackluster response from the former. Finally, three kits arrived on Thursday, paving the way for the much-delayed facility to go operational. The cost of kits was \$21,000.

To resolve the problem of procurement of kits and chemicals on permanent basis, the health department is likely to manage it itself in future.

Prof Hakim Khan Afridi, head of forensic medicine department at KMC, said that the expiry period of kits was from six to 12 months and they would require same stuff after they exhausted the present stock.

“We need to procure

the stock in advance to be able to run the DNA lab uninterrupted,” he added.

Health Secretary Abid Majeed said that a proper procurement plan was being devised to ensure that the lab could work smoothly in future. “The health department is looking after the affairs of the forensic science department to ensure that it performs all investigations promptly,” he added.

He said that the process of procurement was lengthy but they would be able to maintain stock and the operations wouldn’t be affected. “Apart from DNA, other investigations required in criminal cases are already performed in KMC,” he added.

The health secretary said that those services were recently upgraded by spending Rs60mn. He said that so far DNA specimens were sent to Lahore.

## Kashmir Solidarity Day



Protesters march as they take part in a gathering to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day in Karachi yesterday. Kashmir Solidarity Day is observed in Pakistan on February 5 as a way of showing support for those living in Indian-administered Kashmir.

# PML-N set to become largest party in Senate

Internews  
Islamabad

Despite suffering a political setback in Baluchistan province, the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) is all set to become the single largest party in the Senate after 18 years.

The party position in the National Assembly and the four provincial legislatures, which form the constituencies for the elections of members of the upper house, shows that if all MPAs vote in accordance

with the party policy during the March 3 elections, then the PML-N will surely obtain more than 30 seats in the 104-member house.

Last week, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) issued the schedule for the Senate polls according to which polling will be held on March 3.

The commission withheld the schedule for four Senate seats from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) and two from Islamabad as President Mamnoon Hussain was yet to extend the Elections Act 2017 to Fata and determine the

manner for Senate seats from the tribal areas through different orders. On Monday, the ECP announced that the polling for two seats from the capital city will also be held on March 3.

Therefore, on March 3, polling will be held to elect 48 senators (instead of 52) 12 each from Punjab and Sindh, 11 each from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan and two from Islamabad.

It is always difficult to predict the outcome of Senate election in Baluchistan due to complex and multi-dimensional politics in the province. And the recent change in the government in

Baluchistan has even made it more difficult for political experts to predict the results.

The PML-N is expected to have a clean sweep in Punjab by winning all 12 seats, due to its absolute majority in the provincial assembly.

The PML-N has 310 MPAs in the 371-member Punjab Assembly, followed by 30 MPAs from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

However, some political experts believe that if the opposition parties agree on a consensus candidate and also succeed in winning over support of a few

PML-N MPAs, they can manage to win one seat from Punjab.

Similarly, the PML-N is all set to win both the seats from Islamabad one general and one technocrat seat.

At present, the PML-N has 27 senators and nine of them will retire in March. The party is expected to win at least 15 seats and its total membership in the upper house is likely to rise up to 33.

The PML-N, having 16 MPAs in the KP Assembly, is expected to win one seat from the province.

The PTI, which got representation in the Senate for the first

time in 2015, is expected to double its strength after the March elections.

The PTI is expected to win six out of 11 seats from the KP Assembly, where the party is ruling with 61 MPAs.

In Sindh, the PPP is expected to win eight seats, out of the 12, as the party enjoys the support of 94 MPAs in the 168-member provincial assembly.

The contest for the remaining four seats will be interesting in the aftermath of the division within the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), which has 50 MPAs.



# Sanofi rejects govt demand for refund

AFP  
Manila

French pharmaceutical giant Sanofi yesterday rejected a Philippine government demand to return tens of millions of dollars paid for a dengue vaccine after the programme was suspended over health concerns.

The Philippines had asked Sanofi to refund 3.2bn pesos (\$62mn) spent on injecting more than 830,000 schoolchildren with Dengvaxia after the company said last year the vaccine could worsen symptoms in some cases.

Sanofi last month agreed to reimburse the Philippine government half the total sought, for leftover doses of Dengvaxia.

But it said yesterday it would not pay for doses that were already used.

"Agreeing to refund the used doses of Dengvaxia would imply that the vaccine is ineffective, which is not the case," Sanofi Pasteur said in a statement.

The refund offered for unused Dengvaxia doses was not due to safety or quality concerns but simply to show that the company was co-operating with Manila, the French pharmaceutical giant added.

Dengue or haemorrhagic fever, the world's most common mosquito-borne virus, infects an estimated 390mn people in more than 120 countries each year and kills more than 25,000 of them, according to the World



Former health secretary Janette Garin (left) gestures as she sits with current Health Secretary Francisco Duque during a House of Representatives investigation regarding the dengue vaccine costs in Manila, yesterday.

Health Organisation. The Philippines has one of the world's highest dengue fatality rates with 732 deaths last year, the country's health department said.

The country launched the world's first public dengue vaccination programme in 2016.

It was halted last year, along with Dengvaxia sales, after Sanofi warned the injections could make symptoms worse for people who contracted the disease for the first time after being injected.

The announcement caused panic among parents of injected children, said the government, which has since began investigating Dengvaxia's alleged role in the deaths of at least 14 vaccinated children. Sanofi denies responsibility.

Health officials also said immunisation programmes for other preventable diseases were suffering, with many parents now wary of vaccines in general.

Yesterday, Sanofi rejected a separate health department request to set up an indemnifi-

cation fund to cover the hospitalisation and treatment for vaccinated children who contract severe dengue.

"Should there be any case of injury due to dengue that has been demonstrated by credible scientific evidence to be causally related to vaccination, we will assume responsibility," it said.

The government's Public Attorney's Office said yesterday it is helping a Manila couple file a civil suit seeking 3.768mn pesos in damages for the death of their 10-year-old daughter last



Sanofi Pasteur-Asia Pacific head Thomas Triomphe gestures during a House of Representatives investigation regarding the dengue vaccine costs.

December. The suit will name officials of Sanofi, its Philippine distributor and current and former health department officials as responsible for their child's death, according to a copy of the complaint released to the press.

The Public Attorney's Office said it received orders from the justice ministry last December "to extend free legal assistance in civil, criminal and administrative cases to all possible victims of Dengvaxia-related injuries, illnesses and deaths".

## Senator seeks legislative probe of Duterte's bank transactions

Reuters  
Manila

Philippine senator and staunch critic of President Rodrigo Duterte yesterday filed a resolution seeking a legislative inquiry into whether Duterte and his eldest daughter had concealed assets amounting to almost \$2mn.

Senator Antonio Trillanes asked the Senate committee on banks, financial institutions and currencies to probe deposits and investments involving their accounts, which he said could show possible violations of the country's anti-money laundering law.

Duterte has cultivated an image as a humble man who disdains opulence and is uninterested in wealth and materialism. Trillanes has long accused Duterte of failing to disclose his wealth going back to his time as mayor of southern Davao City prior to winning the presidency in May 2016.

Duterte has repeatedly denied wrongdoing and promised to resign if there was proof. The president has even instructed the country's Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) to disclose the transactions, yet he has still to sign the required waiver for that to happen.

Trillanes cited a recent report by Vera Files, a local investigative news organi-

sation, which said Duterte and daughter Sara Duterte-Carpio, who succeeded him as Davao mayor, failed to disclose deposits and investments exceeding 100mn pesos (\$1.94mn) in their official asset declarations.

Duterte-Carpio also denies wrongdoing.

Vera Files said the bank records it saw came from the Senate and were entered into records by Trillanes himself, who claimed the same documents came from the AMLC.

The presidential palace dismissed Trillanes' allegation as "old news" and said the lawmaker has no proof.

"The council had said those documents did not come from them and that the data he was talking about was incorrect," said Duterte's spokesman, Harry Roque.

Roque said any plan to oust the highly popular leader would fail.

The deputy ombudsman last year initiated an inquiry into allegations that Duterte had hidden assets.

The president's office last week sought his removal. Duterte has sparred repeatedly with Trillanes.

Last year, he alleged that the senator had secret overseas bank accounts and read out the account number of one live on television.

Duterte later admitted, however, that he had deliberately read out a false account number, but did not say why.

## Estrada to seek last term as mayor

By Raadee S Sausa  
Manila Times

Manila Mayor Joseph Estrada will run for a third and last term next year.

"Nobody can change my inspiration, no one can divert me on my mission, on my dream in Manila. I had already laid down my programme of government to regain the lost pride and glory of Manila. I will fulfil my promises and with your help, with the support of the people of Manila, I know, we will win on my third run," Estrada said in a statement yesterday.

The mayor laughed off rumours that his son, former senator Jose "Jinggoy" Estrada, will run for mayor in 2019.

The young Estrada is frequently seen visiting Manila City Hall, fuelling speculation that the mayor is contemplating retirement and will support his son's bid for the mayoralty of the capital city.

"I will run again in the 2019 elections," Estrada said, adding that the issue of his health is another campaign propaganda of his political adversaries.

"I will not renege on my promise . . . With the help of God, with the trust given to me by our people, we can make Manila a great city again," he said.

Estrada vowed to give priority to peace and order.

"We all know, we cannot achieve progress without peace and order. A city, province or a country will face difficulties without it," he said.



Estrada: priority for peace and order.

## Former environment dept official convicted

By Ma Reina Leanne Tolentino  
Manila Times

The Sandiganbayan's Fourth Division has found former Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) director Jacob Meimban Jr, guilty of perjury and breach of conduct in connection with his failure to declare his spouse's name in 2008 in his sworn Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN) for 2007.

The court sentenced him to one month up to one year in prison in the perjury case and fined him P5,000 in the breach of conduct case.

In filing the cases last year,

the Office of the Ombudsman alleged that Meimban made "a wilful and deliberate assertion of falsehood by writing 'N/A' (not applicable) in the space provided for the name of his (then) spouse in his 2007 Sworn Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Worth... despite personal knowledge that his marriage with his wife still legally subsists, as his 2004 Petition for Declaration of Nullity of Marriage remained pending in court at that time."

Meimban maintained in his answer that it was a matter of public knowledge that the woman already reverted to using her maiden name which would allow him to write 'N/A'.

### Govt 'won't stop China build-up in sea'

Aside from monitoring, the Philippine government will not do anything to prevent China's military build-up in the seven reefs claimed by the Philippines in the West Philippine Sea, the Malacanang said yesterday, Manila Times reported. In a news briefing, Palace spokesman Harry Roque Jr said the Duterte administration would be hands off on the matter, which he said was old news. "Pretty much, (monitoring) is all we can do. Who says we are not monitoring? I get briefings and I can tell you what ships are plying where. We know about (what is going on) but the question is what can we do? You can protest and I think there is a protest already filed," Roque said. Roque also said all the government could do was to continue relying not only on the principle of good faith but also the general prohibition on the use of force found in international law.

## Nightfall in slum revives spectre of deaths in drugs war

Reuters  
Manila

As night falls in Manila, the Philippine capital, few of the 700 families living in the sprawling portside shanty town known as Market 3 dare to venture out of their homes.

The crime-ridden maze of sheet metal, crumbling cement and wooden boards has become a frontline of the bloody war on illegal drugs that has defined Rodrigo Duterte's presidency since it was unleashed in June 2016.

Dozens of Filipinos who lived along the slum's narrow dirt-floor alleys have wound up dead.

The community lives in fear of masked or mystery men dragging away slum dwellers, or police and their notorious "Tokhang" operations, where officers are required to knock on doors of suspected dealers to urge them to surrender.

But those visits have been fatal. Many people have left.

They leave because of Tokhang," said Nenita Bravo, a 56-year-old Market 3 resident.

"We can't really count them anymore," she said, referring to those killed, adding that she had witnessed many killings in the area. "We can't really count them because there's been so many."



Residents hang out at a shop in Market 3 in Navotas, Metro Manila.

Bullet-ridden corpses are found hours or even days later, often just a few minutes away, although police say there have been no illegal killings in their anti-drug campaign.

Yet the frequent police operations and shadowy murders have hit the slum hard and those who live there say more blood has been spilled since he was elected president on the promise to wipe out drugs and crime in six months.

"Since Duterte came, that's when there was a rise in killings. It was pitiful, especially

so for the many women killed," said Visitacion Castellano, 73, a long-time resident of Market 3.

"They should have given them years. Put them in jail. But not kill."

In Spanish colonial times, Navotas, as the area was known before the patchwork of shanty communities emerged, was the home of a middle class that lived off the sea, either as owners of fishing boats or shipbuilders.

Now employment is in short supply, with men jumping from one informal job to the next, such as scavenging or unloading

fish from returning trawlers.

Although life is hard, people get by, but there is never enough.

Scarcity fuels desperation and the desperate turn to petty crime, or dealing and using drugs, mostly "shabu", the methamphetamine Duterte says could destroy a generation of Filipinos. One 28-year-old man who spoke to Reuters was among those who sold and used shabu.

During one of the deadliest chapters of the drugs war in August 2016, he said his partner and mother of his five children was murdered, her body found

riddled with bullet wounds in the head and chest.

The former drug user, who refused to give his name for fear of reprisals, then fled Market 3 and says many of his friends did the same, or are now dead.

He even tried, unsuccessfully, to take his own life, he said, by hanging himself with his belt.

The man is in poor health, skinny and coughing frequently due to tuberculosis. Nuns now take care of his youngest children.

Too weak to work, he spends his days at the port waiting to

beg for scraps of fish from returning boats. His dream, he says, is to regain strength so he can work, and build a home for himself and his children in the Market 3 shanty town where they can live, free of drugs and the fear of police raids.

"My only concern now is for my four kids to have a different life," he said.

One woman in the community told Reuters that four of her seven children are in prison, three on drugs charges and one accused of murder. Her youngest son was killed in June 2016 in

what police said was a sting operation in which he was armed, and refused to go quietly, a typical description of the almost 4,000 cases in which police say a suspected drug dealer was killed. Police in Navotas could not be reached for comment on the killings during their anti-drugs operations.

The woman, who asked for anonymity, is certain that police killed her son in cold blood while he was asleep, adding that she even heard them joke about it.

Reuters could not independently verify her account.



A painting by an artist on a wall to mark a place where a woman who was arrested during an anti-drug operation was found dead a day later, in Navotas, Metro Manila.



# Maldives president declares emergency as crisis deepens

AFP  
Malé

Maldives President Abdulla Yameen declared a 15-day state of emergency yesterday, deepening a political crisis in the country that has pitted its leader against the nation's top court.

Traditionally known as a honeymooners' paradise, the Maldives has been plunged into chaos in recent years amid a crackdown on dissent, with the president jailing almost all the political opposition since he came to power in 2013.

A standoff between Yameen and the Supreme Court began last week when the president refused to comply with its order to release nine political dissidents and restore the seats of 12 legislators who had been sacked for defecting from Yameen's party.

The court's surprise move on Thursday gave Yameen's opponents the majority in the 85-member assembly, meaning they could potentially impeach the president.

In a stunning blow to the regime, it also paved the way for exiled former president

Mohamed Nasheed - the first democratically elected but who was controversially convicted of terrorism in 2015 - to return and run for president this year.

But the Yameen government has so far refused to comply with the ruling, shuttering parliament and on Sunday ordering police and troops to resist any move by court to arrest or impeach Yameen.

The crisis intensified yesterday as Yameen's aide Azima Shukoor announced the state of emergency on national television.

"The reason for the declaration is that the Supreme Court's ruling was obstructing the functioning of the government," Azima said.

The emergency declaration gives sweeping powers to security forces to arrest and detain individuals, curtails the powers of the judiciary and bars parliament from impeaching Yameen.

But it must be officially conveyed to parliament within two days, according to officials.

Opposition legislator Eva Abdulla said the declaration showed the regime was under pressure.

"A very desperate move. Shows he has lost everything-confidence of the people, Par-

liament, other institutions and the courts. He has no democratic mandate and must resign immediately," she said on twitter.

Nasheed, who had previously expressed fears of unrest in the troubled Indian Ocean nation, said the emergency declaration amounted to imposing martial law.

"(This) is tantamount to a declaration of martial law in the Maldives," he said in a statement, while urging regional super power India to intervene swiftly to end the worsening crisis.

Yameen has faced several unsuccessful opposition attempts to impeach him for alleged corruption.

The president yesterday accused the Supreme Court judges of encroaching on his authority, sending his objections to the court in three separate letters.

There was no immediate reaction from the court.

The opposition has meanwhile urged the international community to pressure Yameen into respecting the court and end the crisis.

"We request the international community, including India, Sri Lanka, the US, Britain, the



In this handout picture, Presidential aide Azima Shukoor speaks during a TV broadcast announcing a state of emergency in Male yesterday.

EU... to do everything in their power to help return power to the people of the Maldives and restore democracy," opposition legislators said.

The United Nations, Australia, Britain, Canada, India and the United States previously

welcomed the court's decision as a move towards restoring democracy in the archipelago.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres at the weekend also called for "restraint" as the crisis escalated.

Strongman Yameen has

been defiant in the face of international pressure so far, ordering the arrest of two opposition lawmakers, who were later freed by a court, and staging a rally late Sunday with hundreds of supporters in the capital Male.

## Nepali tea receives international trademark

Nepalese tea has finally received an international trademark, over a century-and-a-half after cultivation began in the country, authorities said yesterday.

According to the National Tea and Coffee Development Board under the Ministry of Agricultural Development, the brand logo developed and registered by the Department of Industry has been endorsed.

"Nepali tea producers used to export tea with the respective companies' names or logos. Now, the tea will be sold in the international market with a common logo, which represents the national identity," Sheshkanta Gautam, executive director of the Nepal Tea and Coffee Development Board, told Xinhua.

The trademark comprises an image of mountains with "Nepal Tea: Quality from the Himalayas" written below it. Gautam said the logo will be formally unveiled during the third International Tea Festival in Nepal next month. With the approval of the Nepali Orthodox Tea Certification Trademark Implementation Directive, the board has already asked producers, processors, packagers and traders to use the logo.

According to the National Tea and Coffee Development Board, Nepal produces tea in over 27,688 hectares of land in 44 districts, mainly in eastern districts like Ilam, Jhapa, Dhankuta, Terhathum and Panchthar. Nepal has been exporting tea to eight countries, including India, Canada, Germany, the US and China.

Shankar Sapkota, co-spokesperson at the Ministry of Agricultural Development, said, "Having Nepal's own trademark is indeed good news which will be beneficial for the farmers and the overall tea industry."

## Switzerland offers over \$12mn for Rohingya



Switzerland President Alain Berset, left, receiving a floral wreath on his arrival in Dhaka on Sunday as Bangladesh President Abdul Hamid, second left, looks on. President Berset, on a four-day official visit to Bangladesh, offered 12mn Swiss francs (\$12.8mn) of humanitarian assistance for Rohingya Muslims being sheltered in Bangladesh, yesterday.

# Nepal ban on women migrants violates rights, says UN official

AFP  
Kathmandu

Nepal's restrictions on woman migrating for work are discriminatory and inconsistent with international law, a United Nations rights official said yesterday during a visit to the country.

Nepal last year introduced a ban on women working as domestic helpers in the Gulf, one of various laws passed over the last decade to protect female migrant workers from sexual exploitation.

"These bans are ineffective and create the consequence that women migrate through irregular channels and become victims of trafficking," said the UN Special Rapporteur on

the human rights of migrants, Felipe Gonzalez Morales.

"They (the government) don't realise it's discrimination, but these policies are inconsistent with international law and should be lifted."

Nearly half a million Nepalis migrated for work in 2015/16, according to the latest available government data, and migrant remittances account for over a third of the country's GDP.

The vast majority are men working in construction in the Gulf and Malaysia, but around 20,000 women also left that year despite various laws that restrict female migration.

In recent years, Nepal has introduced a minimum age limit for female migrant workers, prevented mothers with children under two from leaving the

country for work, and most recently banned women from domestic work in the Gulf, though enforcement has been patchy.

"The government is trying to make a statement that they are protecting (women). But this can be done through other means," Morales said.

Morales was speaking after an eight-day visit to the impoverished Himalayan nation to assess the recruitment processes for Nepalis working abroad.

Nepal's government has been criticised for failing to protect migrant workers from exorbitant fees charged by recruitment agencies that leave them mired in debt and trapped in jobs overseas.

In 2015, it banned agencies from charging migrants for flights and visas, but enforcement has

been weak. Some suspect authorities are reluctant to clamp down on the lucrative industry.

"Everyone agrees that there is a big problem in the recruitment process, but there doesn't seem to be a concrete plan to take steps to have the employers paying for this, which would be the solution according to international standards," said Morales.

Nepal's reliance on the cash flow from citizens overseas leaves it vulnerable to changes in host countries.

An economic slowdown in the Gulf saw the number of new arrivals from Nepal slump at the end of last year.

Remittances declined by 1.4% in the same period, a tiny drop that still resulted in Nepal's current account balance slipping into the red, according to central bank figures.

## Hamid's nomination papers submitted

By Mizan Rahman  
Dhaka

Nomination papers, on behalf of ruling Awami League (AL) candidate and incumbent President Abdul Hamid for presidential election, were submitted to the Election Commission yesterday.

A delegation, led by AL general secretary Obaidul Quader, submitted the nomination papers to returning officer and chief election commissioner Nurul Huda.

The deadline for submission of nomination paper for presidential election expired yesterday.

If the election commission will not receive any other nomination paper, the lone candidate will be declared elected unopposed.

The Awami League on January 31 nominated President Hamid as its candidate to contest the presidential election.

The nomination was finalised at a meeting of the Awami League parliamentary board with Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Hamid was born on January 1, 1944 at Kamalpur in

Mithamoin sub-district of Kishoreganj district.

In the National Assembly Election of 1970, Hamid was elected the junior-most member from Mymensingh-18 constituency. In 1972, he became the Member of Constituent Assembly. As a pro-people and grassroots level popular leader of Bangladesh Awami League, he was elected Member of Parliament for several times.

Hamid was unanimously elected deputy speaker in the seventh parliament on July 13, 1996 and held the post till July 10, 2001. Later, he became the parliament speaker on July 12 in 2001 and remained so till October 28, 2001. In the 8th parliament he served as the deputy leader of the opposition from November 1, 2001 to October 27, 2006.

Hamid was elected the speaker in the 9th parliament and served office in this capacity during the period 2009-2013.

After the death of Zillur Rahman on March 20, 2013 in Singapore, Hamid became acting president from that day.

Later, he was elected president uncontested as the 22nd president of Bangladesh on April 22 in 2013.

# Lankan bond dealers remanded in custody over alleged scam

Reuters  
Colombo

Sri Lankan court yesterday ordered two executives from dealer Perpetual Treasuries Ltd, arrested over an alleged government bond scam, to remain in custody until February 16.

Police arrested Perpetual's owner Arjun Aloysius and chief executive officer Kasun Palisena on Sunday on suspicion of involvement in the alleged scam.

Perpetual Treasuries bought more than half the debt on sale in a government bond auction in 2015 and a presidential inquiry reported last month that Perpetual Treasuries had profited through illegal means.

Aloysius, Palisena and Perpetual Treasuries have all denied any wrongdoing.

Aloysius is the son-in-law of Arjuna Mahendran, who was central bank governor at the time of the auction.

Kalinga Indratissa, the attorney for both Aloysius and Palisena, said the court had ordered that they stay in custody until February 16 after police filed charges on misappropriation of property, criminal breach of trust, offences un-

der the public property act and the registered stockbrokers ordinance.

The arrests came after President Maithripala Sirisena said last month that a presidential commission investigating the 2015 bond sales had recommended legal action against the finance minister and central bank governor at the time, as well as the owner and officials of Perpetual Treasuries.

Mahendran and Ravi Karunanayakehas, who was finance minister at the time, have also denied any wrongdoing.

Sri Lanka's central bank said last month it had suspended four officers and taken disciplinary action against several others following alleged irregularities in the 2015 government bond auction and that it had initiated several legislative changes aimed at preventing irregularities arising in connection with future bond issues.

Opposition lawmakers have alleged the bond auction cost the state more than \$1bn because of rising borrowing costs but Palisena, in a letter to parliamentarians last week, said state institutions had not lost out in the bond sale.



Bond dealer Arjun Aloysius, second left, is escorted to a prison bus in Colombo yesterday after he was remanded in custody until February 16 after being accused of causing millions of dollars in losses to the state.



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GULF TIMES

## Foles steals Brady's thunder in Super Bowl

Nick Foles was supposed to be the worst quarterback Tom Brady had ever faced in the Super Bowl.

The 29-year-old, only starting Super Bowl LII because of a season-ending injury to Philadelphia's star quarterback Carson Wentz, was considered a minor impediment on Brady's way to his sixth NFL championship.

But in the biggest game, with the crowd roaring in Minneapolis's glass-encased stadium, Brady failed at the one play he needed to make while Foles executed his perfectly.

And it might well have been the difference in Philadelphia's 41-33 victory over the Patriots.

There is always a play in football that changes everything, that is the thin margin between elation and despair.

On Sunday, each team ran essentially the same trick play — with a receiver throwing a pass to the quarterback to sneak downfield undetected.

Brady couldn't haul in his pass, while Foles caught his.

**There is always a play in football that changes everything, that is the thin margin between elation and despair**

As Foles later said when describing the mental approach that has allowed him to handle the moment suddenly thrust upon him: "You need to worry about the little things."

In this case, the little thing was catching a pass.

If Brady had held on to his he probably would have sailed into the end zone and the Patriots, who trailed 9-3 at the time, would have gone up 10-9, changing the entire tone of the game.

The throw from the receiver Danny Amendola (who had taken a handoff from running back James White) was perfect but it just skipped off Brady's fingertips.

Foles didn't have such concerns.

With the Eagles on the Patriots' one-yard line with 34 seconds left in the half, he heard his coaches suggest a play they had run repeatedly in practice the last several weeks: one in which he would slip off to the right and end up with a touchdown reception.

"I said: 'Let's run it,'" Foles recalled after the game.

And when he ducked into the end zone undetected, the pass landed gently in his arms, giving the Eagles a 22-12 lead.

Though New England would later come back to take a one-point lead late in the game, it felt as if that touchdown changed something.

It let the Eagles believe they could win — if for no other reason than their unheralded quarterback did something the great Brady could not.

There were other reasons Philadelphia won, of course: missed Patriots tackles, miscommunication between Brady and his receivers and a Brady fumble near the end of the game.

But somehow what people will remember most about this game were the two eerily similar trick plays and how the underdog quarterback caught the ball while the famous one did not.

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# Dialogue only tool for resolving disputes: envoy

QNA  
Berlin

**Q**atar sees dialogue as the only tool to resolve conflicts and disputes, the country's ambassador to Germany Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani has said.

In an interview published by Diplomatisches Magazin, a German diplomatic magazine, the ambassador said dialogue is the guideline on which Qatar has always relied, both in its foreign policy relations with its neighbours and other countries, or in its role as mediator between conflicting parties.

"Iran, for example, is a neighbouring country, and therefore we cannot ignore its presence and need to maintain an open channel for dialogue and negotiations to resolve any differences whether with Iran or other countries."

The ambassador added that His Highness the Father Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani created a vision based on the leadership of the youth, noting that his wise step in handing over the leadership of the State to the younger generation was a milestone in the memory of the Arabs not on the Qataris.

"This courageous step came from a leader who was at the peak of his leadership and reached the maximum of his national achievements, in guiding the young, to be qualified for governing and administering affairs for the coming ten consecutive years," HE Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani said.

The ambassador said His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani affirmed that "changing leadership in Qatar does not mean that the challenges and tasks have changed for the state."

This was translated on the ground by continuing the process of building the State's institutions, which began during the reign of the Father Emir, he added.

After solidifying the approach of the Father Emir, the Emir renewed the spirit of the State and its institutions, continuing with the reforming process, solidifying the positives, and working to avoid the negatives, according to the national vision that cherishes human development, the ambassador said.

The ambassador added that the Emir adopted a consistent political plan, based on the principles and values that govern national policy in dealing with regional and international issues.

During the Arab Spring, he said, Qatar was always biased towards the need of its people, a good model to follow which promotes justice, human dignity and freedom.

Qatar is moving towards the first parliamentary elections of the Advisory Council, where the Qatari women play an important role in the current council.

Even before preparing the locations for the World Cup, the Qatar National Vision 2030 project recognised the need for improved living and working conditions for expatriate workers, the ambassador revealed.

The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs



Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani

has launched a new and comprehensive programme to improve workers' accommodation by constructing modern housing for these workers in line with international standards, he added.

"The construction of most of the workers' housing is completed and is distributed in different parts of the country and can accommodate more than 340,000 workers," the ambassador said.

Qatar's government has also expanded its health facilities by establishing three modern hospitals and four new health centres for migrant workers.

In addition, a new contract system and a secure payment system have been introduced to ease the payment of salaries to employees through bank transfers, Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani said.

The ambassador added that the Qatari government has worked closely with non-governmental organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) to formulate good practices in labour market policies and committed to applying the highest standards for migrant workers in the region.

Qatar has spared no effort to establish freedom of expression, based on its deep belief in the right of people to obtain reliable information from reliable sources. "Within this context I can refer to, Al Jazeera to be one of the most dedicated media networks in establishing the right of expression, which is translated in the death of a number of

its reporters while carrying out their professional tasks".

Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani said there are expatriates from 190 countries who live in Qatar with different religions, noting that "the State of Qatar welcomes religious diversity and everyone can practice their religious rights without restrictions or obstacles."

Qatar holds relationships with many partners, recognising the importance of diversifying its relations and partnerships with various parties, the ambassador said.

Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani underlined that economic relations with Europe, especially Germany, play a pivotal role in deepening and strengthening relations in various fields of investment, education, health, industry, and tourism.

He noted that the events of Qatar-Germany Cultural Year 2017 resulted in enhancing the strategic and strong ties with the German government and its people.

He added that the events of the cultural year created a harmonious relationship between the Arab and German cultures, which was deepened even more through the establishment of the Arabic Cultural House (The Diwan) in Berlin.

The ambassador pointed out that each country's knowledge of the other's culture, traditions and customs contributes to the subsequent abandonment of stereotyping of the other, thus creating a platform for dialogue between non-opposites.

He stressed that achieving progress and development in any field is a continuous and long-term process.

"I would like to point out that Qatar was ranked first in the Arab world and fourth worldwide out of 140 points to be achieved on the ranking of the Quality of Education report in 2016 issued by the World Economic Forum," Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani said.

"It is important to note here that the State of Qatar allocates 3.2% of its gross national product and more than 12% of its public expenditure on education. This is in line with its 2030 National Vision the preparation for the post-oil era and the establishment of an appropriate academic and industrial infrastructure for the development of the knowledge-based economy," he added.

The ambassador noted that Qatar's preparations for hosting the 2022 World Cup are proceeding according to the plan that was set since winning the 2022 World Cup bid, adding that five stadiums have been completed and the State is actively working to complete the remaining three stadiums.

He pointed out that Qatar Railways Company (Qatar Rail) has already laid the tunnel's infrastructure and a significant part of the construction of the train stations will be operational by 2020.

He declared that the commitment by Qatar to complete the infrastructure in preparation for the 2022 World Cup will be an exceptional opportunity to stimulate the development process and capacity-building and to foster a culture of innovation and creativity in our region.

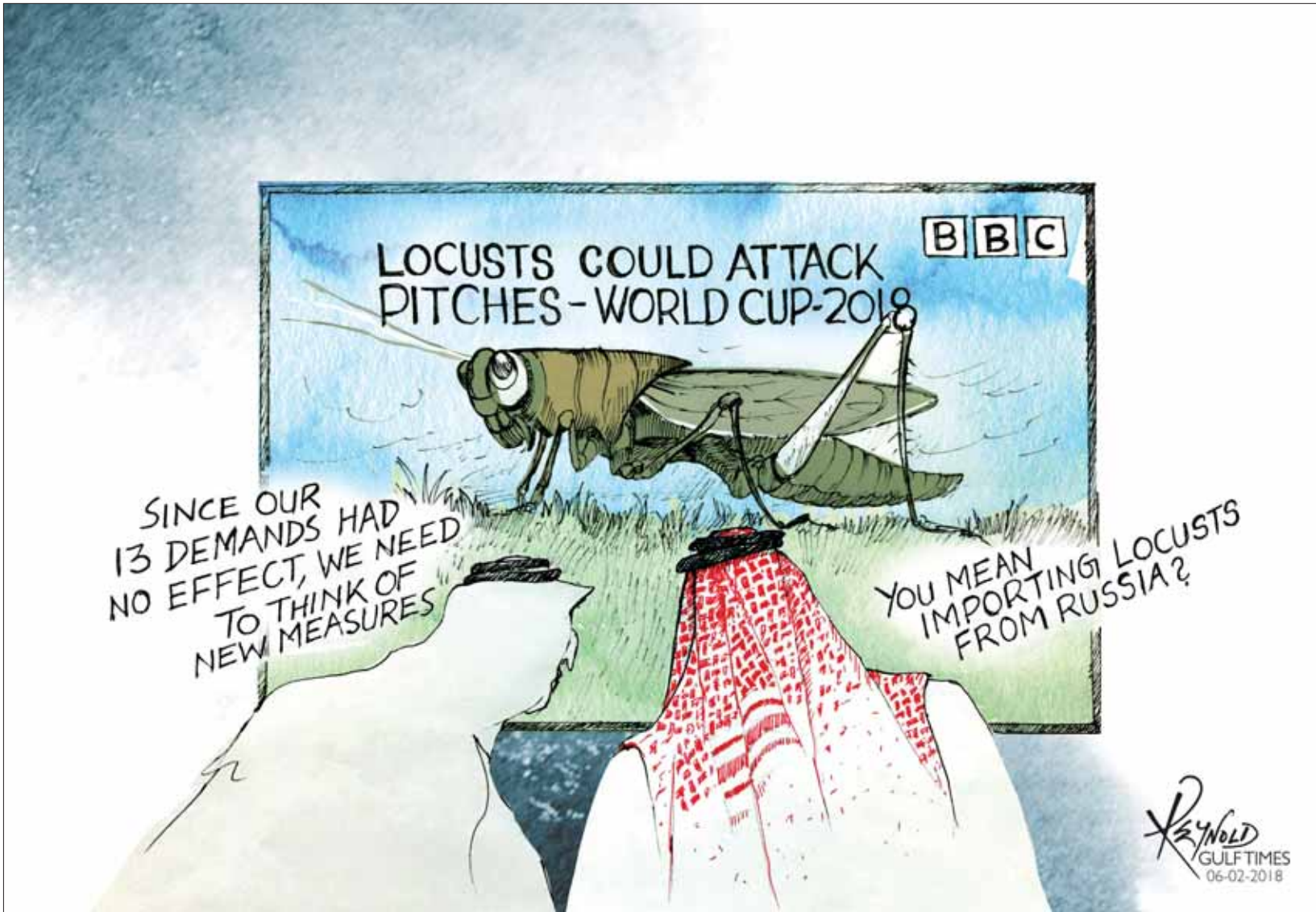
"Over the past six years, we have already made significant achievements in this area, as three of the leading regional initiatives have made a positive impact in the region, from Josoor Institute, which so far has trained hundreds of people in the region, to the hosting of major sporting events," the ambassador said.

"Through the social responsibility programme Generation Amazing, we have been able to contribute to positive change in the lives of thousands of children in countries around the world such as Nepal, Pakistan, Lebanon and Jordan by investing the positive energy of football and developing and refining the leadership skills of the participants" he added.

Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani noted that the 2022 challenge opened up the opportunity to expand the creative skills of the Arab world to meet the challenges facing the 2022 World Cup and other major sporting events around the world.

He pointed out that the winners presented great ideas for the current products, and in a group of incubators in Qatar, applications are being developed that will give them the opportunity to realise their projects and solutions which the world will witness in 2022.

HE the ambassador pointed out that Qatar is one of the safest places in the world. In this regard "tourists will never feel alien due to the friendly and welcoming nature of its people and its well-developed infrastructure."



# Post-Davos depression

By Joseph E Stiglitz

Davos

I’ve been attending the World Economic Forum’s annual conference in Davos, Switzerland – where the so-called global elite convenes to discuss the world’s problems – since 1995. Never have I come away more dispirited than I have this year.

The world is plagued by almost intractable problems. Inequality is surging, especially in the advanced economies. The digital revolution, despite its potential, also carries serious risks for privacy, security, jobs, and democracy – challenges that are compounded by the rising monopoly power of a few American and Chinese data giants, including Facebook and Google. Climate change amounts to an existential threat to the entire global economy as we know it.

Perhaps more disheartening than such problems, however, are the responses. To be sure, here at Davos, CEOs from around the world begin most of their speeches by affirming the importance of values. Their activities, they proclaim, are aimed not just at maximising profits for shareholders, but also at creating a better future for their workers, the communities in which they work, and the world more generally. They may even pay lip service to the risks posed by climate change and inequality.

But, by the end of their speeches this year, any remaining illusion about the values motivating Davos CEOs was shattered. The risk that these CEOs seemed most concerned about is the populist backlash against the kind of globalisation that they have shaped – and from which they have benefited immensely.

Not surprisingly, these economic elites barely grasp the extent to

which this system has failed large swaths of the population in Europe and the United States, leaving most households’ real incomes stagnant and causing labour’s share of income to decline substantially. In the US, life expectancy has declined for the second year in a row; among those with only a high school education, the decline has been underway for much longer.

Not one of the US CEOs whose speech I heard (or heard about) mentioned the bigotry, misogyny, or racism of US President Donald Trump, who was present at the event. Not one mentioned the relentless stream of ignorant statements, outright lies, and impetuous actions that have eroded the standing of the US president – and thus of the US – in the world. None mentioned the abandonment of systems for ascertaining truth, and of truth itself.

Indeed, none of America’s corporate titans mentioned the administration’s reductions in funding for science, so important for strengthening the US economy’s comparative advantage and supporting gains in Americans’ standard of living. None mentioned the Trump administration’s rejection of international institutions, either, or the attacks on the domestic media and judiciary – which amounts to an assault on the system of checks and balances that underpins US democracy.

No, the CEOs at Davos were licking their lips at the tax legislation that Trump and congressional Republicans recently pushed through, which will deliver hundreds of billions of dollars to large corporations and the wealthy people who own and run them – people like Trump himself. They are unperturbed by the fact that the same legislation will, when it is fully implemented, lead to an increase in taxes for the majority of the middle class – a group whose fortunes have



IMF managing director, Christine Lagarde attends a news conference on the world economic outlook during the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland yesterday.

been in decline for the last 30 years or so.

Even in their narrowly materialistic world, where growth matters above all else, the Trump tax legislation should not be celebrated. After all, it lowers taxes on real-estate speculation – an activity that has produced

sustainable prosperity nowhere, but has contributed to rising inequality everywhere.

The legislation also imposes a tax on universities like Harvard and Princeton – sources of numerous important ideas and innovations – and will lead to lower local-level public

expenditure in parts of the country that have thrived, precisely because they have made public investments in education and infrastructure. The Trump administration is clearly willing to ignore the obvious fact that, in the 21st century, success actually demands more investment in education.

For the CEOs of Davos, it seems that tax cuts for the rich and their corporations, along with deregulation, is the answer to every country’s problems. Trickle-down economics, they claim, will ensure that, ultimately, the entire population benefits economically. And the CEOs’ good hearts are apparently all that is needed to ensure that the environment is protected, even without relevant regulations.

Yet the lessons of history are clear. Trickle-down economics doesn’t work. And one of the key reasons why our environment is in such a precarious condition is that corporations have not, on their own, lived up to their social responsibilities. Without effective regulations and a real price to pay for polluting, there is no reason whatsoever to believe that they will behave differently than they have.

The Davos CEOs were euphoric about the return to growth, about their soaring profits and compensation. Economists reminded them that this growth is not sustainable, and has never been inclusive. But such arguments have little impact in a world where materialism is king.

So forget the platitudes about values that CEOs recite in the opening paragraphs of their speeches. They may lack the candour of Michael Douglas’s character in the 1987 movie *Wall Street*, but the message hasn’t changed: “Greed is good.” What depresses me is that, though the message is obviously false, so many in power believe it to be true. – Project Syndicate

● *Joseph E Stiglitz is the winner of the 2001 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences. His most recent book is Globalisation and its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalisation in the Era of Trump.*

## Lessons about immigration from Wilson

By Jules Witcover

Washington

A century ago, President Woodrow Wilson addressed a class of newly naturalised American citizens upon their oath-taking at the hallowed Philadelphia Convention Hall. He had some wise words for them that would well-serve his present successor amid his conspicuously ruinous efforts to destroy the American immigration system.

Wilson said then, on May 10, 1915: “This is the only country in the world which experiences this constant and repeated rebirth. Other countries depend upon the multiplication of their own native people. This country is constantly drinking strength out of new sources by the voluntary association with it of great bodies of strong men and forward-looking women out of other lands. And so by the gift of the free will of independent people it is being constantly renewed from generation to generation by the same process by which it was originally created.”

The 28th president continued: “You have taken an oath of allegiance to a great ideal, to a great body of principles, to a great hope of the human race. You have said, ‘We are going to America not only to earn a living ... but to help forward the great enterprises of the human spirit – to let men know everywhere in the world there are men who will cross strange oceans, and go where a speech is spoken which is alien to them if they can but satisfy their quest for what their spirits crave; knowing that whatever the speech, there is but one longing and utterance of the human heart, and that is for liberty and justice.’”

Wilson observed: “I certainly would not be one even to suggest that a man cease to love the home of his birth and the nation of his origin ... but it is one thing to love the place where you were born and another thing to dedicate yourself to the place to which you go. You cannot become thorough Americans if you think of yourselves in groups. America does not consist of groups. A man who thinks of himself as belonging to a particular national group in America has not yet become an American, and the man who

goes among you to trade upon your nationality is no worthy son to live under the Stars and Stripes.”

He went on: “We came to America, either ourselves or in the persons of our ancestors, to better the ideals of men ... to get rid of the things that divide and to make sure of the things that unite. It was but an historical accident no doubt that this great country was called ‘the United States.’ Yet I am thankful that it has that word ‘United’ in its title, and the man who seeks to divide man from man, group from group, interest from interest in this great Union is striking at its very heart.”

Finally, Wilson said: “Just because you brought dreams with you, America is more likely to realise dreams such as you brought. You are enriching us if you came expecting us to be better than we are.”

Yet Wilson’s full-throated praise for America’s open-door policy, conceived to maintain the pool of fresh migrant workers with and without special technical and scientific skills, is under heavy fire today in parts of Donald Trump’s America. Ironically, Wilson’s message that day was

overshadowed by pressure put on him to go to war against Germany after the sinking of the British liner Lusitania, in which 128 Americans died.

“There is such a thing as a man being too proud to fight,” he said at the end of the same speech. “There is such a thing as a nation being so right that it does not need to convince others by force that it is right.” As a result, all hell came down on pacifist Wilson for so saying.

His shocking remark was widely published and attacked, leaving his stout defence of America’s generous and self-sustaining immigration system to prove its own reward and worth over the next century, and counting. Meanwhile, the current misplaced efforts to disrupt our immigration system go on, under a different president who fails to appreciate its continuing enrichment to the miracle of America. – Tribune News Service

● *Jules Witcover’s latest book is The American Vice Presidency: From Irrelevance to Power, published by Smithsonian Books. You can respond to this column at juleswitcover@comcast.net.*

## Live issues

### Cellphone radiation linked to tumours in male rats

Reuters

Washington

Male rats exposed to very high levels of the kind of radiation emitted by cellphones developed tumours in the tissues around their hearts, according to a draft report by US government researchers on the potential health risks of the devices.

Female rats and mice exposed in the same way did not develop tumours, according to the preliminary report from the US National Toxicology Programme (NTP), a part of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

The findings add to years of research meant to help settle the debate over whether cellphone radiation is harmful.

Although intriguing, the findings cannot be extrapolated to humans, NTP scientists and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said on Friday. They noted that the animal studies were meant to test extreme exposures to cell phone radiation, and that current safety limits on cellphone radiation are protective.

However, the two 10-year, \$25mn studies – the most comprehensive assessments of health effects and exposure to radio frequency radiation in rats and mice to date – do raise new questions about exposure to the ubiquitous devices.

In the studies, about 6% of male rats whose entire bodies were exposed to the highest level of cell phone radiation developed schwannomas – a rare type of tumour – in nerve tissue near their hearts, while there were no schwannomas in animals that were not exposed to radiation.

“The intriguing part of this is the kind of tumours we saw were similar to tumours noted for quite some time in some epidemiological studies in heavy duty cellphone users,” John Bucher, a senior scientist with NTP, said in a telephone interview.

“Of course, these were in the nerves in the ear and next to the brain, but the tumour types were the same as we saw in the heart.”

Dr Otis Brawley, chief medical officer of the American Cancer Society, noted that the studies were negative for common tumours.

“These draft reports are bound to create a lot of concern, but in fact they won’t change what I tell people: the evidence for an association between cellphones and cancer is weak, and so far, we have not seen a higher cancer risk in people,” he said in a statement on Twitter.

Brawley said if cellphone users are concerned about this data in animals they should wear an earpiece.

Unlike ionising radiation such as that from gamma rays, radon and X-rays, which can break chemical bonds in the body and are known to cause cancer, radio frequency devices

such as cellphones and microwaves emit radio frequency energy, a form of non-ionising radiation.

The concern with this type of radiation is that it produces energy in the form of heat, and frequent exposure against the skin could alter brain cell activity, as some studies have suggested.

In the NTP study, rats and mice were exposed to higher levels of radiation for longer periods of time than what people experience with even the highest level of cellphone use, and their entire bodies were exposed all at once, according to the draft report.

Bucher said the effect likely only showed up in the male rats because they were larger, and likely absorbed more radiation than the female rats or mice.

Cellphones typically emit lower levels of radiation than maximum levels allowed, the draft report said.

Cellphone radiation quickly dissipates, so the risk, if any, would be to areas of the body in close proximity to the device emitting the radiation, Bucher said.

He said the findings are intended to help inform the design of future cell phone technologies. The study looked at only 2G and 3G frequencies, which are still commonly used for phone calls. It does not apply to 4G or 5G, which use different frequencies and modulation, he said.

NTP, a part of the National Institutes of Health, will hold an

external expert review of its findings on March 26-28.

Dr Jeffrey Shuren, head of the FDA’s radiological health division, said there is not enough evidence to say cellphone use poses health risks to people.

“Even with frequent daily use by the vast majority of adults, we have not seen an increase in events like brain tumours,” he said in a statement. “We believe the current safety limits for cellphones are acceptable for protecting the public health.”

Asked what the public should take from the study, Bucher said, “I wouldn’t change my behaviour based on these studies, and I haven’t.”


Nevertheless, the findings are potentially a concern for device makers, especially the world’s three biggest smartphone sellers, Apple Inc, Korea’s Samsung Electronics Co Ltd and China’s Huawei Technologies.

The CTIA, the trade association representing AT&T Inc, Verizon Communications Inc, Apple Inc, Sprint Corporation, DISH Network Corporation, and others, said on Friday that previous studies have shown cellphone RF energy emissions have no known health risks.

“We understand that the NTP draft reports for its mice and rat studies will be put out for comment and peer review so that their significance can be assessed,” the group said.

Samsung and Apple did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

## WEATHER REPORT



**Three-day forecast**

**TODAY**  
Maximum Temperature : 24°C  
Minimum Temperature : 14°C

**WEDNESDAY**  
Maximum Temperature : 27°C  
Minimum Temperature : 16°C

**THURSDAY**  
Maximum Temperature : 26°C  
Minimum Temperature : 16°C

**Fisherman's forecast**

**WARNING**  
Inshore : Expected poor horizontal visibility at places at first.

Offshore  
**WEATHER**  
Inshore : Nil

**Wind**  
Inshore : Northwesterly-Northeasterly 05-12 KT.


Offshore : Northwesterly-Southwesterly at 03-12 KT

Visibility : 4 - 8/2 KM or less at places at first.

**SEA STATE**  
Offshore : 13 FT

**Around the region**

	Weather today	Max/min	Weather tomorrow	Max/min
Baghdad	M Cloudy	25/09	Sunny	25/09
Kuwait City	M Sunny	23/11	P Cloudy	24/11
Manama	M Sunny	23/14	P Cloudy	23/15
Muscat	Sunny	24/17	Sunny	25/17
Tehran	Sunny	04/03	Sunny	13/02



**Around the world**

	Weather today	Max/min	Weather tomorrow	Max/min
Athens	Sunny	16/07	Showers	17/10
Beirut	M Sunny	21/14	Sunny	21/16
Bangkok	Sunny	29/21	Sunny	31/21
Berlin	P Cloudy	01/-7	Sunny	02/-7
Cairo	M Cloudy	27/16	P Cloudy	31/17
Cape Town	M Sunny	23/17	P Cloudy	27/19
Colombo	S T Storms	31/24	S T Storms	30/24
Dhaka	M Sunny	29/16	P Cloudy	29/19
Hong Kong	M Sunny	15/12	P Cloudy	16/14
Istanbul	P Cloudy	11/04	S Showers	13/09
Jakarta	T Storm	29/24	T Storm	30/24
Karachi	Sunny	28/12	Sunny	27/13
London	M Cloudy	04/-1	M Sunny	05/-2
Manila	M Sunny	29/22	P Cloudy	29/22
Moscow	Cloudy	-11/16	P Cloudy	-8/16
New Delhi	P Cloudy	24/09	Sunny	23/07
New York	P Cloudy	04/-1	Rain & Snow	05/-2
Paris	Snow	02/-2	S Showers	03/-4
Sao Paulo	Cloudy	24/17	P Cloudy	27/17
Seoul	Sunny	-6/14	M Sunny	-2/12
Singapore	P Cloudy	29/24	P Cloudy	29/24
Sydney	P Cloudy	25/19	P Cloudy	26/19
Tokyo	Clear	07/-1	Clear	08/-1



# QFBA honours 32 Kawader graduates

The Qatar Finance and Business Academy (QFBA) recently held the graduation ceremony for the fifth cohort of the 'Kawader' programme under the patronage of HE the Minister of Finance Ali Sherif al-Emadi.

The ceremony saw the graduation of 32 outstanding young Qataris, bringing the total number of participants in 'Kawader' to 124 students, who have been primed to contribute effectively to the human capital development of the country's financial services sector, the national economy's progress, and to the realisation of the Qatar National Vision 2030.

Al-Emadi praised the winning efforts of the programme's fifth cohort and highlighted the important role that acclaimed training programmes like 'Kawader' play in the development of a high-calibre, human capital base that can help drive the growth of the entire industry on a national and regional level.

Acting CEO Dr Mohamed al-Emadi said: "it is with such initiatives and capacity-building programmes that QFBA reaffirms its

role as a key player in supporting a modern, industrialised, knowledge-based economy."

Qatar Financial Centre Authority CEO Yousuf Mohamed al-Jaida said: "Kawader, with its unique and excellent training programme, is one of the main sources to provide the financial services sector with young, talented Qatari professionals with the right set of skills and knowledge to go on to play important and vital roles in the economy. Graduates from previous cohorts are proving themselves in the jobs and positions they are occupying and are contributing to the sustainability and prosperity of Qatar's economy, which indicates the success of the programme in achieving its objectives."

Kawader is an exclusive and innovative learning initiative that consists of an intensive training programme specially-designed to equip every participant with practical skills and competencies in cross-functional areas in order to qualify them to become tomorrow's business leaders and decision-makers in Qatar's emerging financial services industry.



Graduates of QFBA's fifth cohort of the 'Kawader' programme.

# QCDC wraps up its Winter Career Camp

Qatar Career Development Centre (QCDC) has completed the fourth edition of its Winter Career Camp with a closing ceremony at the Education City Student Centre. During the event, participating students were awarded certificates of completion in the presence of their parents, along with press and community members.

The weeklong camp provided an integrated educational and recreational experience for secondary school students, who learned many life and practical skills, QCDC – a member of Qatar Foundation (QF) – said in a statement yesterday.

Abdulla al-Mansoori, director of QCDC, said: "Our Winter Career Camp is designed with a very simple, yet effective, approach: young participants are given the opportunity to reflect and learn about their abilities, skills and professional preferences in a simple, enjoyable and uncomplicated way, with the aim of choosing the career that best suits their talents."

During the camp, students visited institutions operating



Students listening to a Qatar Rail representative during their visit to one of the stations.

across various fields, including tourism, transportation, culture and media, as they listened to specialists in these fields and gained firsthand knowledge about the nature of the profes-

sions available in these institutions and a realistic understanding of professional life, the statement noted.

The students began the camp with a visit to the QF headquar-

ters and were introduced to Qatar National Library, Education City and QF's partner universities. On the second day, the students went to Katara to learn about its cultural centres, and



QCDC Winter Career Camp 2018 participants visiting Education City.

also visited Sawt Al Khaleej radio station, the Visual Art Centre, Youth Hobbies Centre and Brooq Magazine.

Northwestern University in Qatar hosted the participants at its studio in Katara, where they participated in a live demonstration of a TV presentation and were also introduced to various specialties within the media industry.

On the third day, Qatar Tourism Authority introduced the students to the field of tourism and the professions available to them, with a site visit to a hotel to learn about hospitality. Following this, the students went to Qatar Railways Company, commonly known as Qatar Rail, and learned about careers in the field of transport and public transportation.

On the fourth day, the students went to Qatar Airways, where a group of aviation specialists introduced them to aviation and the Cadet Pilot Programme. The students then conducted live demonstrations

for taking off and landing in a flight simulator.

The final day of the camp included an introductory session about universities in Qatar, such as Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Qatar University, Community College of Qatar, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar and Stenden University Qatar, among others. Representatives of these universities provided students with an overview of their academic programmes and admission requirements, which would help students make informed academic decisions and prepare for university life.

"Through the visits we made during the camp and the various live demonstrations we participated in, such as the exercise at the radio station, I managed to overcome my fear of public speaking," said Khadija Ali al-Khayat, a participant.

Students also participated in various educational career

activities, programmes and interactive training workshops to increase their awareness about the importance of academic and professional planning for their future. The activities and workshops were designed to provide students with a range of useful practical skills, enhance their self-confidence and instil entrepreneurship, perseverance and teamwork, the statement added.

On the closing day, the students attended a workshop titled 'The Role of Parents in Guiding their Children's Career Paths', where they explored how parents influenced their children's decision-making and the importance of introducing the concepts of career guidance to families.

The workshop also examined the Career Decision-Making Paradigm, which is a practical tool and a mental probing exercise that aims to assist individuals, particularly young people, in identifying suitable academic and career paths.

## All set for Aspire Winter Festival

The Aspire Winter Festival 2018, dubbed as Qatar's largest entertainment event, is all set to welcome thousands of Qatar residents and visitors from Thursday at the Aspire Park. Running until May 1, the festival features more than 50 unique and fun-filled activities and an array of entertainment shows and activities for the whole family.

"Aspire Zone Foundation (AZF) has a clear strategy to diversify its entertainment activities and events to attract more families to encourage them to go out and enjoy the outdoors at Aspire Park," AZF's public relations and communication director Nasser Abdullah al-Hajri said in a statement.

AZF partnered with the Festival Organisation Company to bring a one-of-its-kind event to the country,

where festival-goers can enjoy the pleasant weather this winter and participate in outdoor activities. "It is sure to be a very unique experience," al-Hajri stressed, citing the various offerings at the festival. Music performances and 7D cinema and theatre are among the major attractions. There will be unusual games, activities and attractions such as the pirate treasure hunt, extreme rush slide, circus, extreme race, sand pit, pop up art gallery, and lego and board games, as well as rock climbing and archery stations. The festival also hosts dedicated food and beverage area, featuring more than 14 outlets, as well as 30 shopping outlets, introducing international vendors. Visitors can come every day from 4pm to 10pm and from 3pm to 10pm every Friday and Saturday.

# Safari starts 10-20-30 promotion

Safari Group has announced that its 10-20-30 promotion has started with special offers and discounts. In a statement yesterday, the retail group said "the 10-20-30 promotion is the most popular promotion" from Safari, and a large variety of products is showcased as part of the initiative.

Safari Group director and general manager Zainul Abideen stressed that Safari has "created a transparent relationship between the customer and the firm".

On offer in the promotion are

different food items as well as milk and milk products, among several others. Also, the special offers include one set (six pieces) of 175gm Fa soaps for QR10, 10kg Lotus jasmine rice for QR20 and a 1.2-litre Scarlett rice cooker for QR30, the statement notes.

Combo offers include western, south Indian, north Indian, Arabic and Chinese dishes in the Safari hot food and bakery division. Safari has invited all food-loving customers to avail of a 'two full grilled chicken' promotion for QR10.

Several items are available at

'low prices' as part of the promotion. These include 20 1,200gm Perdix grilled chicken for QR20 in the frozen items division, 20 Twix Top chocolate of 21gm each for QR10 in the grocery division and a four-piece hot-pot set for QR30.

A wide variety of school stationery is also among the attractions of the 10-20-30 promotion. These include one-ream Comix A4 paper for QR10 and a Faber-Castell colouring set for QR10, among others. Other discount offers include infrared helicopter for QR30, and battery-operated

recharge cars and drumming toy for QR20.

The garments division has offers such as men's T-shirt for QR20, men's shirt for QR30, ladieswear such as sari, churidar etc for QR20, and girls' fancy frock for QR30. In the electronic items section, one can avail of offers such as a trimmer for QR30, rechargeable emergency lights, torches, calculators, headsets and iron boxes for QR20.

Safari Group has said musical shows will be held from today until February 8 as part of the 10-20-30 promotion. The

shows will be led by Sanjay, who is known for music reality shows on Tamil and Malayalam channels. Entry is free.

Meanwhile, Safari is conducting the 'Win 10 Nissan Patrol Car' Promotion! Five draws will be held as part of the mega promotion, with two vehicles to be won in each draw. To avail of the opportunity to win a Nissan Patrol, customers need to make purchases worth a minimum of QR50 to be eligible for a raffle coupon.

A draw for two cars will be held on February 28 at Safari Mall, Abu Hamour.

# Local brand to showcase collection exclusively designed for Qatar



Papillon Jewellery will showcase items at DJWE 2018, designed exclusively for Qatar.

By Joey Aguilar  
Staff Reporter

A Qatari jewellery brand will showcase a one-of-its-kind collection, which reflects the local culture and heritage, at the Doha Watches and Jewellery Exhibition 2018, scheduled to take place from February 21 to 26 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre. Dubbed as 'Papillon collection' (named after the brand), the simple yet elegant items have been exclusively and specially-designed

for Qatar by Papillon Jewellery.

Papillon is a Qatari concept born from the passion of Noora al-Ansari, "who believes in the beauty that comes from the simplicity of natural elements like precious stones."

"Papillon (means butterfly in French) concept is cozy; from the first moment that a client enters the jewellery, the purpose is to make her feel at home," she said. "Each item has been designed and created very carefully to make it elegant, classic, and beautiful."

By combining fine diamonds and pearls with precious stones

in varied colours, the goldsmith represents different shapes and sizes of beautiful butterflies in white gold. The Papillon collection consists of bracelet, earrings, ring and a necklace combining lavish pearls.

As the stores' main collection, Papillon represents the identity and concept of the brand name and reflects the luxuriousness of the place (France) at the same time.

"We plan to create a jewellery collection to be called 'made by Qatar' using pearls and other precious stones, and at the same time we also plan to cre-

ate a 21k gold jewellery that is purely designed to reflect Qatari heritage and culture," al-Ansari noted.

She added that Papillon offers a selection of gifts for every occasion and according to the season, woman's age and traditional festivities in Qatar. The jeweller cited a growing demand for Qatar-inspired and beautifully-crafted jewellery pieces saying such items define the personality of the owner who is proud of his culture and heritage.

Papillon will showcase its Royal collection, "which was

born in the heart of India" and are made for special occasions such as engagement or wedding events while its Signature collection is expected to attract "elegant ladies who likes ready to use and easy to combine with many styles and outfits jewellery."

Papillon also has a Pakistani Gold collection, which will be introduced in Doha for the first time, and an Omani Gold collection, which shows the culture and heritage of the Gulf country. The brand will also showcase its Florence-inspired Firenze Italia collection and Elegant Everyday

collection, designed for female customers who want to look elegant all day long whether it is for work, meet friends or go out casual.

About the exhibition, she said, Papillon is honoured and pleased to take part in a prestigious event for the second time since "it is not easy to get into DJWE – a high scale and famous exhibition."

"It is an opportunity for us to showcase our concept, brand and collections with many big names (in the jewellery and watch industry) in Qatar," she stressed.